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# DRAMATICS

*The Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts*

Vol. XVII, No. 7

APRIL, 1946

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## COVER PICTURE

Members of the Heights Players (Troupe 410) at the Heights High School, Cleveland, Ohio, in *The Thirteenth Chair* as staged and directed by Dina Rees Evans.

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# NOTES AND FOOTNOTES

by the EDITOR

The usual attractive brochures and advertisements from summer theatres will be in the mail during the next several weeks, promising scholarships, opportunities to work with outstanding actors, appearances in professional productions, and other inducements which appeal to theatre-minded people.

We want to be among the first to recommend to students and teachers those summer theatres which have well established reputations for meritorious work done under the direction of qualified leaders. A summer's course with one of these theatres provides rich opportunities for learning such as perhaps is found nowhere else. Direct contacts with professional actors, directors, and teachers provide the knowledge and inspiration essential to educational theatre workers everywhere.

But we also want to be the first of the season to direct attention to the sad fact that not all summer theatres with attractive brochures and smart advertisements do meritorious work, or provide the training and experience so lavishly promised. Not infrequently, it turns out that the scholarship is no more than a small reduction in a previously inflated enrollment fee; the "appearance in a professional production" is no more than a role as secondary stagehand in a single production; and the "work with outstanding actors" is omitted entirely due to "the inability of the stars to meet all their summer engagements."

To those readers of this magazine who plan to attend a summer theatre we cannot over-emphasize the need for careful and thorough investigation in advance of enrollment. Full particulars should be obtained from the Better Business Bureau in the community where the summer theatre is located. The opinions of reliable persons well acquainted with the work of the theatre should also be obtained. Above all, the prospective applicant should request the names and addresses of persons who have attended the summer theatre—persons within the applicant's own territory whose opinions can be secured through an interview. Failure of any theatre to readily provide the names and addresses of former pupils who may be consulted, regardless of reasons offered, should be taken as pretty good evidence that "something is rotten in the State of Denmark." A paragraph to the wise is sufficient!

Over 23 of the 24½ million graduates of secondary schools since 1870 are still living, according to the U. S. Office of Education. One-fourth of all the people in the United States with secondary school education have been graduated from high schools in the past five years and are under 25 years of age.

There was a time when we thoroughly enjoyed a movie shown in the neighborhood theatre. First to greet us was a full-length news-reel bringing us the events of the past two or three weeks. Next came a one-reel travelogue showing us the beauty of Guatemala, or the majesty of Mt. Vesuvius, or the scars of the sand-swept Sahara. We rejoiced when the change of reel announced a Mack Sennett two-reel comedy with Ben Turpin in the role of the harassed plumber trying to repair a leak in the bathroom. We laughed until our sides ached. Next followed the "feature" picture with Betty Compton, or Milton Sill, or William S. Hart, or Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., in the leading role. We lived every minute of the show. When the lights came on we were reluctant to leave. The whole show ran only about an hour and forty-five minutes—perhaps we had better stay and see the news reel and the travelogue and the comedy again. It was such fun going to the movies.

But, alas, all that is changed now. An evening at the neighborhood movie is often an insufferable ordeal, a test of physical and mental endurance lasting three long hours. Rarely is there a news-reel (news-reels are so short these days). A travelogue is shown only once in a great while. The two-reel comedy is missing entirely. In its place we are offered an occasional cartoon (which we pretend to enjoy), or a reel showing some popular dance orchestra making heathenish noises which some call music. The piece de resistance of the evening is a monstrosity called the "double feature". Just to sit through one of these showings is agony such as we could inflict only upon the theatre manager. But even more maddening is the trash that is frequently shown. In the place of wholesome stories of romance, adventure, and achievement, we are compelled to look upon the exploits of murderers, thieves, gangsters, racketeers, robbers, killers, and demented people. We look to those seated nearest us as a momentary relief for our eyes and our emotions, only to discover that little children have covered their eyes with their hands, or have slipped down in their seats, to avoid seeing the horrors flashed upon the screen. How we wish that the "good old days" were with us again. And how we wish that the American people would rise up as one and give Hollywood a slap it would remember for the next hundred years!

April is the month of Shakespeare's birthday. Dramatics groups everywhere, particularly those in the schools and colleges, will do well to observe this event with appropriate talks, discussions, scenes, and readings from the Bard's plays.

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He finally landed with a family by the name of Turner. Boarding with the Turners was the mountain school teacher, who soon recognized in Chad a most unusual boy with a thirst for knowledge and a love of the finer things. Then one spring, the Turner men took Chad to Frankfort on a raft of logs which they were floating down the river to sell. Becoming lost from the men in Frankfort, Chad started to walk back to the mountains. On the road, he was picked up in a car belonging to Major Calvin Buford, of the Kentucky aristocracy. The Major was possessed of a kindly heart and when he heard the boy's story, he took him to his palatial home.

The Major, a bachelor, lived with his maiden sister, Miss Lucy Buford, who was no less shocked than her servants and neighbors at the advent of this illiterate boy in the Buford home. But the Major insisted that he be raised as one of their own and given their name. The Buford's next-door neighbors were General and Mrs. Dean. When Chad met Margaret, their attractive young daughter, it was love at first sight.

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DRAMATICS MAGAZINE





Dance from a May Day Festival at the Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, Va.

# Producing the May Day Festival

By HAROLD WEISS and LEVIN HOUSTON III

Mary Washington College, University of Virginia, Fredericksburg, Va.

THE May Day program has a long tradition of dramatic history behind it, but very little planned effort is given by the organizations that attempt yearly to produce these "supposed" joyous pageants. So about April, activity starts in the school; beauties are hurriedly chosen, the physical education group or a folk-dancing club whips up a few dances; mothers, aunts, and passers-by are inveigled into stitching together lengths of cheap material and the program is on the way. Generally, the audience has its eye on the one or two members of the immediate family who are cavorting self-consciously on the greenward; everyone agrees later the program was excellent, "considering the short time we had to prepare it in" and the group disbands throwing into the junkpile the few properties, costumes, etc., amassed by the debacle.

If the type of May Day program described above meets with your needs, little more need be said. But it is the sincere belief of the writers that for a true culmination of a year's work in fine arts, there is no better vehicle to show the public how education can further the esthetic abilities of its pupils. If such a purpose is desired by the school system, the May Day program can really become a dramatic endeavor in the real tradition of the Greeks. The drama department, the music groups, the art classes, English classes, the physical education department, the home economics groups . . . even the manual arts divisions and commercial education classes can be represented in an integrated May Day show. But this type of production requires careful planning, real interest and sincere work. (As what successful dramatic show does not?) And it is in the fall of the year

that activities and plans should be started.

At Mary Washington College, the May Day is one day when visitors flock to the campus in throngs. Perhaps an outline of the procedures, here somewhat idealized, might serve as a guide for others who would like to try similar pageants or ballets for the spring. Step number one calls for the choice of a staff for production that will be responsible for the entire show. Here in Fredericksburg the show is divided into two parts . . . the parade of beauties and crowning of the queen which is colorful, spectacular, and breath-taking . . . but unrelated to the dramatic section of the day's program; and part number two, about which this article deals.

TO head the staff of directors for the second part, a "regisseur" or producer should be elected or appointed. The personality and qualifications of this chief director need not be discussed here. Sometimes the extreme interest of one particular person puts him automatically in the "driver's seat." Any catalogue of the virtues necessary for this post would discourage even the most intrepid would-be director. But let us assume this post has been filled. The following departments will logically follow: director of the script-writing group, music director, costume director, scenic director, publicity chief, program director, make-up chief, dance director and maybe several other important cogs as the need arises.

If the May Day is to have dramatic punch, a plot is necessary . . . or at least an idea. A conference of all directors should be held before the idea is decided. In judging possible ideas, the scene or prospective place whereon the show is to

be held must be considered . . . whether it is to be inside or outside. Probably if the out-of-doors is preferred, an alternate spot should be scheduled in case of inclement weather. Size of cast is another consideration. The May Day for many generations seems to be in the province of the distaff side, so the story should be weighted toward the feminine. An idea should be adopted that would lend itself to interesting use of colorful costume. There are dozens of places to go for ideas. Local history is one; legend and fairy story are effective. Actually, the more familiar the tale, the more the audience seems to like a new interpretation. Such old favorites as *Alice in Wonderland*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Aesop's Fables*, and *Mother Goose*, never fail to delight young and old. A theme might be selected from any romantic historic period. The Greek myths, early Americana, the Renaissance period . . . all offer possibilities. Or one might develop an idea around some picturesque country, or use a carnival or circus theme; or some profession might be exploited . . . anything that gives opportunity for dance, pantomime and music. Of course, nowadays world-of-the-future cavalcades furnish interesting themes for internationally-minded groups.

Once the idea is chosen, a broad plot development is set up. Remember that an hour is approximately maximum length for this type of entertainment. Any group that does creative writing, or any individual for that matter, can be utilized for this purpose. This plot can be dramatized with interpolated dances, or can be read by a narrator, or verse-speaking choir, or can be printed on the program if the program is done in ballet style. Or combinations of these methods may be used.

Next comes the work of the music groups, the choreographers and the talent scouts. If excellent talent, either solo or ensemble, is available, special numbers can easily be written in or arranged within the general theme structure. For music, instrumental and vocal groups can be utilized. On one occasion we used a school orchestra with a glee club acting





Scene from the production of *Janie* as given by members of Thespian Troupe 25 at the Spanish Fork, Utah, High School with Jayne Evans Tanner directing.

as a living curtain, closing each scene by an appropriate song and crossing in front of the audience while singing so as to hide the formation of the succeeding tableau. Original music is desirable, of course, but many commercial houses will assist the prospective musical arranger to obtain appropriate selections if this is too difficult. Such houses as G. Schirmer, 3 East 43rd Street, New York, or Theodore Presser, 1712 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, maintain educational departments that will be happy to furnish aid on the musical score. When the music is selected full scores should be written out and the musical organizations taking part started on rehearsal. If possible, recordings made of the rehearsed music can be used by the dance and dramatic groups.

**T**HE dance, pantomime, and dramatic groups get the "go-ahead" sign now. These should be reminded that their efforts had better not be too intellectual, but rather simple interpretations that further the dramatic story involved. Nearly every kind of dance can be utilized but some variety is to be preferred. And variety from year to year makes each succeeding May Day Program a joyous surprise. The costuming must be considered in relation to the type of dance or movement displayed. The costumes are designed with movement in mind. Sometimes costumes look lovely in static poses but lose all beauty of design within the actual dance. For an example, if intricate foot and leg movements are called for, certainly skirts that sweep the floor would be out of place. It is bad principle to be penny-wise about costuming. The simplest

way is rental, but in this article we are not advocating simple ways. It is much more interesting to produce one's own, using the facilities of the school's home economics department or any willing, interested group. If the costumes are made strongly enough they might form the basis for a future costume room for the school—a great necessity for the majority of high schools all through the nation, judging from the multitudinous requests for costume articles received here from schools of the vicinity.

Such items as staging and program design need not be discussed in these pages. They are the same as for any dramatic production. It is true, though, that the fewer the properties and stage accouterments, the better. And what few are used can be highly stylized or simplified to a great degree. If an outdoor stage is used, take full advantage of the natural setting. Sometimes flats aid in the projection of voices or musical instruments. But these days of public address systems make such amplification a much simpler problem. The program can be an aid to developing the plot necessary and can also be an opportunity for artistic display.

A word of caution should be directed to the make-up artists, if the production is to be presented in the daytime. By all means, the make-ups used should have a rehearsal under the light that will prevail during the performance.

The past five years have seen such varied productions at Mary Washington College as *The Story of Persephone*, based on the Greek legend; *The Thirteenth Egg*, a fanciful modern idea showing the emancipation of woman; *Zingara*, a tale

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of the 16th century Spain and gypsies; *Sleeping Beauty in the Wood*, based on the old fairy tale; *Joan of Arc*, the French historical story, and this year's ballet promises to be based on sketches of early Fredericksburg, Virginia and probably will be titled *Once a Village*.

*The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* is an example of one of the May Day Shows. The program notes are as follows:

#### ACT I

##### *The Woods*

The maids are preparing for the arrival of the royal family who are returning from the christening ceremony. (*Dance.*) The pages lead the way for the royal family. (*Procession.*) The queen who is very much excited urges the fat old king, who is followed by his trainer, to hurry. (*Opportunity for gymnastic display.*) The ladies-in-waiting and the nurse with Briar-Rose join the happy King and Queen. The fairy godmothers enter one by one and present their wondrous gifts to the little princess. Beauty, Music, Wealth, Learning, and Grace have presented their gifts when suddenly the uninvited fairy godmother of Fear descends upon the little princess. There remains one fairy godmother who has not appeared, Courage; her gift is the only one with which to combat Fear. The old wicked godmother leaves, promising to return at a later date. (*Climactic Dance.*)

#### ACT II

##### *Scene I*

##### *Royal Woods Outside the Castle*

The pages gaily dance as they make ready the fire for the Queen. The Queen and her ladies are making jam. After their work they dance a waltz. The King takes his daily dozen, aided by his trainer. Briar-Rose greets her father and dances for him. She looks at her Mother's jam but becomes bored. Spying an old woman in the corner at a spinning wheel she goes over and begs to spin. The old woman allows her to spin when all of a sudden she pricks her finger—and all the court falls asleep. The old witch gloats and calls in her underlings the "Sleepers." They dance to the song of Sleep casting a spell upon the group and form a barrier between the sleeping people and the outside world.

##### *Scene II*

##### *One Hundred Years Later*

A handsome prince has heard of the legend of the Sleeping Beauty. He goes through the forest and sees the great barrier before him. He starts to cut his way through when the old witch fearing her underlings will be hurt calls them away. He is amazed at finding so many sleeping people. He sees the beautiful Sleeping Beauty, goes over and kisses her upon the forehead. He quickly glances away to see if anyone is watching; Briar-Rose awakens but quickly closes her eyes so that the prince may kiss her forehead again. He does and this time she greets him with a smile. He dances to show his great skill. She joins him and together they wake up the entire court. All are stunned at first. All join in the celebration and the king and queen bless the happy pair. They go upon their way and live happily ever afterwards.

Try a dramatic all-school May-Day once. Pull out the stops and let yourself go. You'll find it a thrill to be released from the bound traditions of the typical comedy or mystery play.

# The Symbolist Theatre

The Sixth in a Series of Seven Articles for Students  
on Theatres of Yesterday and Today

By BARNARD HEWITT

Chairman, Dramatics Committee, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, N. Y.

**B**EFORE the Naturalistic theatre with its scientific spirit and its aim of producing a complete illusion of everyday life had got a firm foothold, the reaction against it had begun. In 1890 three years after the opening of the Théâtre Libre, citadel of Naturalism, Paul Fort, French Symbolist poet, founded the Théâtre d'Art to be a shrine of Symbolist drama, in which the external appearance of real life is irrelevant and the only reality is the life of the soul.

Actually Symbolism had appeared in drama even before there was any Naturalistic theatre. Before he wrote his Naturalistic plays Ibsen wrote *Peer Gynt*, which gives expression in purely symbolic fashion to man's deluded search for self-realization. And Ibsen's realistic plays grew more and more symbolic until in *The Lady from the Sea*, *Little Eyolf*, *The Master Builder* and *When We Dead Awaken*, the action is clearly a symbol for some larger reality than appears on the surface.

In the broad sense, all drama, like any other form of art, is symbolic. A symbol is anything which is made to stand for something else. A picture is a symbol of an object, a word, of an idea. Even the most naturalistic of drama is not reality but an expression of the playwright's view of reality. The successful Naturalistic playwright creates an illusion of real life which is a symbol for, or to put it another way, which expresses his view of real life. The Symbolist playwright, although as we shall see he does not discard illusion, attempts to express his view of life without regard for creating an illusion of that life.

In the most Naturalistic of drama, the meaning is conveyed by the whole action, as in Gorki's *Lower Depths*. In less Naturalistic drama individual actions and objects, although presented with their life-like background, take on because of the emphasis given to them by the playwright individual symbolic meanings. Thus in Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, although the creature has all the attributes of a real wild duck, it becomes through comments Ibsen puts into the mouths of his characters symbolic of the human action of the play. In Maeterlinck's wholly symbolic *Pelleas and Melisande*, the doves which fly for a few moments around the heads of the hero and heroine appear and disappear in complete mystery. They have no reality except as a symbol of the love that is growing between the two characters. Even in the Naturalistic drama ordinary things sometimes take on more than ordinary meaning, but in the Symbolist drama, ordinary things are

largely divested of their ordinary meaning and appear to have been included for their extraordinary meaning only. The action of the Symbolist play is obviously an allegory.

It is probably significant of the limitations of Naturalistic drama that not only Ibsen but other pioneers in that style wrote Symbolist plays as well. Hauptmann wrote not only the extremely Naturalistic *The Weavers* but also *The Sunken Bell*, which expresses in fairy tale terms the conflict in an artist between the desire for domesticity and the need for artistic freedom. And Strindberg wrote not only the harshly Naturalistic *The Father* but also *The Dream Play* which is pure fantasy.

One of the first great expressions of Symbolism was in the romantic music-dramas of Wagner, who sought to make them a kind of super-drama which should express through material drawn from the northern myths the soul-struggle of modern man. He believed that if the theatre was to become an adequate medium for this expression it must become a union of all the arts. Wagner was only partially successful in realizing his ideal. He made great changes in the music and libretto of opera but he retained the Baroque painted scenery. Adolphe Appia fired by Wagner's ideal but disappointed with its embodiment on the stage, published in 1895 the first of the books in which he developed a theory for reforming the staging of Wagner's music dramas. Appia regarded the music as the direct expression of the inner drama, and the singer-actor, whose movements and voice are controlled by the music, as the prin-

cipal expressive agent. He declared that the setting must be designed not with any notion of imitating a place real or imaginary, but as an expression in space of the singer-actor's pattern of movement. Only by serving as a base and background for the singer-actor's movement can the setting achieve the ideal reality appropriate to the inner life of the drama. In Appia's theory light is, like music, a direct expression of the inner drama, but in addition it serves to weld actor and setting into a single plastic whole. Appia himself remained relatively unknown until after his death in 1928, but his idea of the stage as a cubic volume of space enclosing the actor and the Wagnerian notion of drama as a harmoniously integrated union of all the arts became fundamentals of the Symbolist theatre.

**O**NE of the earliest groups to make a name for itself in Symbolism was the Munich Artists Theatre. Led by Max Littmann, theatre architect, Fritz Erler, designer, and Georg Fuchs, critic and theorist, it opened in 1908 with the first Symbolist production of Goethe's *Faust*. Instead of the massive architecture of Medieval Germany, it used a few scenic elements carefully selected for their suggestive and emotional value. Faust's study was a niche in a bare massive wall. A single pillar evoked the cathedral scene. Simplification and suggestion were there, two of Symbolism's most important contributions to the theatre.

Three years earlier Gordon Craig had published *On the Art of the Theatre*, the first of his many exuberant blasts against Naturalism. He published also fascinating designs for a new kind of scenery, which, like the new acting, should express not reality but truth, not the life of the street but the life of the soul.

Max Reinhardt, profiting by the example of the Munich Artists Theatre and by the theories of Appia and Craig, made popular the unified production. He revived many of the classics of the theatres



Aboard Ship from *Peer Gynt* at the Theatre du Vieux Carré, New Orleans. The atmospheric, ethereal character of the scene is typical of the Symbolic Theatre.



making them colorful exciting experiences. He found in staging methods of the past methods of stylizing his revivals, drawing conventions from the Greek Theatre for his production of *Oedipus* and from the Medieval Theatre for his productions of *Everyman* and *The Miracle*.

*Stylization* is a word which came into the theatre with Symbolism. The Symbolist producer seeks some way of expressing in every aspect of production the essential meaning or mood of the play, and thus each play acquires its individual *style* of production. Mirrors, tinsel, crystal, and rococo decoration become an expression not primarily of the Baroque period in history but of the gilded artificiality of Restoration comedy. *Macbeth* is set not in scenery suggestive of Medieval Scotland but under three great brooding masks which evoke the supernatural powers the producer feels dominant in the play. Sometimes Symbolist scenery was selective, using a part to symbolize the whole environment; sometimes as Gorelik says "environment was reduced to a symbol."

THE Symbolist Theatre came to this country in 1915 with the production of Anatole France's one-act comedy, *The Man Who Married A Dumb Wife*. The scenery and costumes were a revelation to Broadway long dominated by Belascan Naturalism. The play is set in the Middle Ages so one might have expected heavy dark masonry, gargoyles, tapestries, pointed arches, and gray costumes, but it is a fantastic comedy, and Robert Edmond Jones, who had recently returned from studying with Reinhardt in Germany, symbolized the play's comic spirit by using primary colors, light frame construction, square open windows and a light, wooden balcony supported on stilts. The costumes were of felt and had the stiffness of medieval woodcuts but they were richly colored. Jones went on to become one of our leading designers, scoring his greatest successes in Shakespeare and Eugene O'Neill, and making Symbolism the scenic (fashion) for non-realistic plays. Jones has said that the scene should be not a picture but an image. It should be addressed to the inner eye which sees, rather than to the outer eye which observes. A good scene, he has said, is "a feeling, an evocation."

Such an evocative scene is obviously suited to the Symbolist drama of Maeterlinck, whose *Pelleas and Melisande* is one of the most effective Symbolist plays. In this play we are introduced to a world of the playwright's imagination, the country of Allemonde. From the very beginning when the castle gate groans and shrieks as if in agony as it is opened and when the maidservants scrub and scrub at the stain on the sill, each action, each line of dialogue has an air of strangeness, which comes from a weight of unwonted meaning. In the end it is clear that the dreamlike figures of the play stand for all men

and women whom Maeterlinck sees born with the shadow of death on them to be whirled by their passions and desires to a destruction which they fear but can do nothing to escape.

Symbolist drama has been used also to express the inner life of men as we have come to know that life through the psychology of Freud Jung and other explorers of the subconscious mind. Eugene O'Neill in *The Great God Brown* uses masks to symbolize the difference between man's inner self and the self he presents to the world. In *Strange Interlude* he transforms the old-fashioned aside into a means of expressing subconscious impulses and desires, which are at odds with the expression of conscious speech.

The completely Symbolist play seeks to create an illusion, but it is an illusion of imaginary life or the life of the soul or of the subconscious mind. It does not have the logic of cause and effect or of probability which we associate with everyday reality, but it has a logic or consistency of its own, which springs from the play-

wright's vision of truth. Consequently, it is well-served by the abstract plastic unity advocated by Appia, which creates a strong illusion of place but of place outside of time. In acting its requires patterns of movement and speech removed from their real-life context and somehow freighted with extra meaning. The characters in Saroyan's plays at first glance might be mistaken for everyday Americans, but they do not believe and they often do not speak the way we should expect such Americans to do. In the Broadway production of *The Beautiful People* most of the actors were unequal to the task of finding appropriate expression for the Symbolist characters. Eugene Loring, however, a dancer trained in the modern ballet, succeeded. Except for his slightness of build, he did not look at all like the fourteen year old boy he was portraying, but he found a pattern of movement which was not an imitation of a fourteen year old boy but a formalized expression of a fourteen year old boy.

Gorelik in his *New Theatres for Old* writes as if Symbolism had taken over the American Theatre. That is surely an exaggeration. Symbolism has become the popular style, though not the only style, for the production of Shakespeare and of modern non-realistic plays. And all modern non-realistic plays are not Symbolist. Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth* belongs not to the Symbolist theatre but to the theatre theatrical. It is packed with symbols, but these are not knit together so as to create an illusion of imaginative reality. Instead, the theatrical nature of the performance is constantly emphasized as if to combat any tendency towards illusion.

SYMBOLISM has had an effect on the settings and costumes of Naturalistic plays, for it was discovered that selection, the stripping of realistic setting and costume down to the fundamental lines, forms and colors was more effective than a profusion of unorganized detail in creating an illusion of real life.

Besides O'Neill many of our playwrights have tried their hands at Symbolist drama. Philip Barry, most successful with realistic drawing room comedy, has also written the symbolic *White Wings* and *Here Come the Clowns*. Elements of Symbolism have appeared too in some of the plays of Maxwell Anderson, Paul Green, Martin Flavin, Irwin Shaw and even Clifford Odets. However, the great majority of new plays produced this year on Broadway are Naturalistic.

The opponents of the Symbolist theatre charge that in seeking universal truth it has soared too far above the earth and in probing the soul and the subconscious it has turned too far inward, in both cases losing touch with living truth. Certainly with its emphasis on man's inner life, Symbolist drama seems particularly incapable of expressing the economic and social truths which loom so large in the world of today.

### Manuscript Play Project

THE New Plays Committee of the American Educational Theatre Association announces a play project in immediate effect that will make available to cooperating theatres a minimum of nine manuscript plays each year.

1. *Selection of Plays:* Plays produced by theatres interested in experimental production of new plays will be recommended for the Project by one member of the New Plays Committee. With the concurrence of two other members, the play will be accepted for mimeographing. Plays selected will have had one successful production or will have placed in some National Contest or will carry a strong initial recommendation by a Committee member.
2. *Co-operating Theatres:* Departments of Speech, English, or Drama, Community Theatres, other theatre groups interested in developing and producing manuscript plays become co-operating theatres by the payment of \$10 to George Blair, Executive Secretary of the New Plays Committee, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.
3. *Privileges of Co-operating Theatres:*
  1. Each co-operating theatre will receive one mimeographed examination copy of each play issued by the New Plays Committee.
  2. The play will be available for production for a period of one year, unless the playwright makes a contract for publication or professional production. In the event of such arrangement, the playwright may withdraw the play unless the play is in rehearsal or production.
  3. Co-operating theatres will be guaranteed a low royalty. For full stage production, the royalty will be \$10. For laboratory production, special arrangements for lower royalty may be made through George Blair, Executive Secretary.
  4. Mimeographed copies for the cast will be made available at \$1.50 a copy. (This may be lowered if a sufficient number of theatres enter to distribute the cost of mailing and mimeographing.)



*Blithe Spirit* as given at the Ensley, Alabama, High School (Troupe 258), with Florence Pass directing. The character of Madame Arcati was changed to Monsieur Arcati.



## The Actor's Best Foot Forward

By C. LOWELL LEES

*Director of Dramatics, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.*

**T**ONIGHT was the school play. Peg, Marion, Doug, and I had seats together. The first act was over. Most of the large audience had poured into the lobby and aisles to discuss the play and buy candy or punch that was sold by various campus organizations. We had preferred to remain in our seats. As the audience melted away about us, Peg leaned over to me and whispered, "Well, what do you think of it?"

I had to admit, "I'm too busy watching the way Miss Jones has put it together."

"That's the way I feel," confided Marion who had overheard. "If I hadn't read the play, I wouldn't know what the first act was about."

"You know," laughed Peg, "when I lost the part in tryouts I thought I wouldn't be able to sit through the play, I would be too critical of Helen playing my part. But funny, tonight she's just a pin to me. I'm more interested in what she's doing than I am in how she's doing it."

"I don't think what's-his-name playing my part motivated his first scene very well," said Doug censoriously, where upon we all laughed. We had only been directing our plays a week and we were talking as if we were old veterans. It had been an exciting week: the first day we had decided the rehearsal schedule. Our casts had seemed enthusiastic and willing to work. We blocked the plays and the casts seemed to like the movement we had planned. The four of us tried to meet each day and talk over our problems. Peg's cast developed the first major problem. Her cast had voted that anyone absent from rehearsal without an acceptable excuse was to be dropped. It was also agreed that the excuse should be presented

We continue with the sixth episode in the story of Marian, Peg, Doug, and Joseph—four students determined to learn the art of play directing. The concluding episode will appear in our May issue.—Editor.

before the absence occurred. The best actress in Peg's cast was absent on the third day. Peg was very upset, but decided she must get someone else. She arranged for someone to take the part, but in the meanwhile the girl called to explain that her absence was unavoidable, and that she could not let Peg know beforehand. Marion thought Peg should reinstate her, but Doug agreed that a rule was a rule, and if the girl were reinstated there would be no more discipline. I finally hit upon what I thought was the ideal solution. Since the cast made the rule, Peg couldn't break it, but if the cast wished to change the rule, it could. Peg followed this advice and the girl was reinstated.

The next problem was my own. I couldn't seem to get my cast to motivate the movement I had given them. Doug, however, had hit upon a simple method which we all finally adopted and used. It was to question the actor continually about what he did; for example, if the actor crossed from one place to another you asked, "Why do you go there?" to which he often replied, "Because you told me to do so." "But isn't there some other reason," you persisted. If he seemed unable to answer you suggested two or three possibilities. Finally the actor made a decision and thus gave the reason to the movement. This was a slow process, but achieved the best results. Cast and directors alike became conscious of the great overall principle of stage action: no movement without purpose. It was

amazing the meanings that we discovered as we worked bit by bit ahead. Each day something new and different was revealed that we hadn't discovered in our first readings of the plays.

"There goes my problem child," said Doug as he pointed out one of his cast members. The audience warned by a buzzer was beginning to file in for the second act of the school play.

"What's his difficulty?" queried Marion.

"He'll never figure out anything for himself," Doug said. "He always says show me or if you'll tell me how you want it done, I'll do it."

"I surely hope you don't show him," said Peg, as if she felt that was the greatest sin a director could commit.

Her shock was complete when Doug replied, "Sure I do if I know how. Otherwise I tell him to figure it out for himself."

**W**E didn't have time to put Doug right on the fine points of direction for the second act had begun. The second act gained speed and built strongly to climaxes. We could see and appreciate the effectiveness of the stage pictures and general artistry of the director as we never had before. The act seemed soon over, and we were all ready to talk to Doug, but while the applause of the act was continuing Doug said, "Let's get some punch." Before we could reply he was in the aisle and making his way to the nearest exist. It was sometime before we could reach him for the aisles were clogged with people. Everyone we saw seemed to be enjoying the play. Some even asked if we didn't think the acting was unusual, implying, we thought, that the actors were so much better than we would have been. But we, too, had enjoyed the play too much to make any adverse reply. Finally, we overtook Doug who had purchased each of us a glass of punch.

"I can well imagine what you are going

to say," he said as we drank the punch. "But what could I do? I tried everything I knew, but he just sat until I showed him what I meant. Anyway, our psychology teacher says you can't imitate anything you haven't learned."

"Well, your problem child can't equal mine," I said. "She is so slow. She can't remember business from one day to the next. If I try to get her to go faster she becomes discouraged and thinks perhaps she had better drop the play."

"Be happy you haven't someone who is quick," said Marion with a wry face. "Just guess what happened yesterday? One of my cast came to me and said, 'How'm I doin?' Very well, I said. 'I know my lines, don't I?' Yes, almost perfectly, I admitted. 'My actions, too,' he insisted. Yes, yes, much better than the rest, I confessed, thinking he wished to be complimented. 'Well, then,' he concluded, 'I won't have to come to any more rehearsals, will I?' When I said that he most certainly would, he just shrugged his shoulders and said, 'What's the use. I just have to play around until the rest catch up with me.' Marion added with a sigh, 'I guess I'll have to stay up nights trying to find things for him to do.'

"The important factor is to keep everyone working at top speed," Peg commented.

"That means, I guess," I said "that you simplify the work for the slower ones and complicate the work for the quicker ones."

"That wouldn't be fair," Marian argued.

"Maybe not," I conceded, "but you want your cast to work as a team, don't you, not as individuals, and you don't want the slower or weaker members of your cast to weaken the play. If you were right, the person with the smaller part would play it better than the person with the larger part if they were equal in ability."

"Now we are getting into the finer points," exclaimed Doug. "Directing a play must be like directing a basketball

### Change of Address

Change of address should be promptly reported to us, as the post office does not forward second-class matter. The old address, as well as the new, should be reported.

team. The stronger players must cover up and augment the work of the weaker players. Only if the team works together over a longer period will they be able to compensate for each other's strengths and weaknesses."

"I've learned one thing, Doug," said Peg, "that you can't make rules unless you make a set for each individual. What works with one won't with another."

"You might add," I interposed, "that the fine art of direction is the director's ability to adjust to the individual needs of each member of his cast."

"If you mean the director is the chief flunky of the cast, I agree," said Peg.

"What is that statement?" smiled Doug. "He that would be the master must be the servant?"

"What mischief are you four brooding over now," called one of our friends. "I've never seen such a serious four. You come to a play to enjoy yourselves, my dears. Don't you like the play?"

### DRAMATICS MAGAZINE Recommended

**D**RAMATICS MAGAZINE is included in the first one hundred publications recommended for high school libraries by Laura R. Martin, chairman of the Evaluation Committee of the American Association of School Librarians. Miss Martin's evaluation appears in her book, *Magazine for High School Libraries*, published in February by the H. W. Wilson Company, New York City. The selection of the best one hundred publications for high schools was made out of a field of 5,982 magazines published in the United States at the present time.

Writing of DRAMATICS MAGAZINE, Miss Martin's report concludes as follows: "Photographs are chosen for action as well as artistic merit, and the whole tone of the periodical emphasizes wholesome group activity."

**T**HE buzzer sounded the third act and we passed into the auditorium. During the third act Peg nudged me and said, "Aren't you amazed at how well Raymond is doing?"

"I never thought he had it in him. He has always seemed so awkward and ill at ease around the campus."

"He still is awkward, but its part of his character. He surely is funny. I believe he'll steal the show," Peg continued.

"He'll get the best mention in the write-ups, you watch and see," I said. A shush from someone back of us ended for a time our conversation. The play reached its hilarious crisis and the denouement had the audience in a hysteria of laughter. There was a storm of applause as the curtain fell. Everyone was exclaiming how good the play was. I had an odd reaction—I was so happy I wanted to cry. Was it that I was pleased that Miss Jones and the cast had succeeded so well, or was it that I felt this audience was cheering, whether it knew it or not, the director whose ability and genius had guided this play into being. Maybe it was because suddenly I felt a part of this thing called theatre and was learning to understand and appreciate it.

We made our way backstage. It was a riot of excited people gathering in groups around each happy actor. We pushed our way through these groups exclaiming as we passed, "You did very well. The play was excellent. You were splendid." Finally we found Miss Jones in the far corner of the stage quietly picking up some properties. She turned as she saw us and greeted us with, "Well, fellow directors, how was it?"

We all tried to tell her as best we could how we had enjoyed the play and particularly the excellent direction. She brushed our compliments aside, although we knew she was pleased, with, "It pays to have good actors."

"But how did you get Raymond to do such a fine piece of work?" I asked.

"Its the director's job to turn the actor's limitations into assets," she said.



Scene from the production of *A Murder Has Been Arranged* at the Holmes High School (Troupe 154), Covington, Ky. Directed by Robert W. Crosby.



# Mystery Films

The Sixth of a Series of Seven Articles on Motion Picture Appreciation

By HAROLD TURNEY

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THE first "moving" picture with a complete story, *The Great Train Robbery*, was, in reality, a combination of two formulas—the mystery and the western; and as long as subjects continued to be photographed primarily out-of-doors, the union persisted. But when inventions of lighting equipment permitted filming indoors, the format split; the western pattern remained in the wide-open spaces, the mystery pattern joined other types to be photographed in imitation settings.

For several years after the separation, the mystery formula wobbled about striving for a definite outline. Then, gradually, it emerged as two easily-recognizable types—the horror-thriller and the mystery-detective.

Progress eventually reaches certain peaks; milestones to be cherished. The horror-thriller reached such a zenith with Lon Chaney Sr. and his appearance in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* where the emphasis was laid upon makeup and weird effects and shots. Several minor peaks were later achieved by *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. Orson Welles in *Citizen Kane* climaxed the mystery-detective formula and the clue of "Rosebud" became the dominant factor in the film. Subsequently, the two types were wedded in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

After a brief interval of comparative quietude, writers and producers very suddenly shattered the established formulas into a dozen different outlines and, in the course of time, each sped through a cycle of production and popularity. Currently, we are on the tag-end of the psychopathological and the psychoneurosis cycles—*Rebecca*, *Spellbound*, *Leave Her to Heaven*, *The Spiral Staircase*. In this last film, only one major character could be classed as normal.

Such a series and such films are merely off-shoots of the old-styled mysteries. In the minds of Hollywood's great, when it becomes logical to conclude that the central characters of a straight "horror" story are at the same time psychopathic, a stronger, more modern continuity results. Consequently, now in production, over twenty films follow this argument. Their stories will narrate the experiences of a group of inmates in an eighteenth century English insane asylum, of a psychoneurotic war veteran, of a psychopathic killer, of a half-mad dancer, of a power-mad maniac who tries to prevent California from joining the union of states, and of a detective who solves a murder by applying psychopathic pressure on the suspect.

Probably the best-known cycle of mys-

tery-detective films was the gangster-crime era following World War I. It ran the gamut of every known and fancied event and remained popular with the public for a score of years. However, to pass censorship boards, the stories always depicted the leading criminal as a "weakling," a "victim of circumstances." From the cycle three players rose to stardom—James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson and Humphrey Bogart. Of these films three stand as monuments to the series—*Public Enemy*, *Little Caesar*, *Scarface*. Lately, the Republic Studios made a feeble attempt to revive interest in the series, but their film, *Dillinger*, failed to ignite the spark because the major studios were too involved in modern neurosis.

Throughout the contemporary history of mystery films, the famous detective stalks as the leading character, gathering and analyzing clues until the final reel, when he suddenly points a finger at the guilty party and without previous warning, ends the picture. In the medium of the short story, *Sherlock Holmes* established the fashion; in films, *Charlie Chan*. Since the advent of these protagonists, we have periodically followed the activities of *Philo Vance*, *Ellery Queen*, *The Thin Man*, *The Falcon*, *Boston Blackie*, *The Shadow*, *The Lone Wolf*, *The Whistler*, *The Crime Doctor*, *Mr. District Attorney*, and *Night Editor*.

The murder-mystery film has been a field-day for shoe-string producing units and amateur writers. Certain minor organizations specialize in this type of film

—P.R.C., Monogram, Republic, Columbia, Universal—because the costs are low and the income certain. In some cases these small companies produce as many as fifty-two films a year including twenty of the mystery type and twenty of the western type. Both classifications are usually "B" pictures which are produced cheaply so as to allocate larger budgets for a few "splash A" films. Too, they help to give the companies their necessary number of releases for the year which sell at low rental fees and which are at play-dates on traditionally light nights. However, occasionally, a major studio produces a mystery film giving the picture every possible production value and a nation-wide publicity campaign and receiving tremendous financial returns for their efforts—*This Gun for Hire*, *Double Indemnity*, *Rebecca*, *Laura*, *Ten Little Indians*, to mention only a few of the late ones.

Mystery films pay-off for writers, too. Not only professional writers, but non-professional as well. Active policemen, detectives, F.B.I. operators make the composing of these stories a side-line to their regular activities. Often they outline true or fancied cases, turn the synopsis over to expert writers who fashion them into short stories, novels, radio continuities, or shooting scripts. For example, shortly to be filmed is *The Rattlesnake Murder*, written by Eugene D. Williams, special assistant to the Attorney General, U. S. Department of Justice. It is based on a sensational murder case which Mr. Williams helped prosecute in Los Angeles, California.

**C**ALLED consistently "whodunits" in Hollywood, the mystery film has an established technique that is repeated more or less in each succeeding picture. Whether good or bad, it is traditional and must be followed by every writer, pro-



A dramatic scene from Paramount's latest mystery-melodrama, *The Blue Dahlia*, co-starring Alan Ladd, Veronica Lake and William Bendix.



ducer and director before "superstitious" studio heads will allow the film to continue in production. The formula grows wearily monotonous. For example, fighting is subdued to low, eerie intensities and photographs feature dark corners, black shadows and strange, frightening impressions. At moments of crisis, lights in the locale of the story are strangely and suddenly blacked-out and for a few seconds the screen goes blank.

Weird music aims to heighten the terrorizing mood; sound effects include pounding rain, cracks of thunder, streaks of lightning, ocean waves crashing against rocks, creaking doors, strange animal sounds, and human blood-curdling screams. Traditionally, a crash of thunder should shake the theater immediately after a strong climax in the story.

Added to these effects, the shock-and-shudder film features players owning portentous twists of physiques and facial contours. With extreme false make-ups, the characters become a motley assortment of odd types seldom to be seen in life. Stock figures in a murder-mystery number the imperturbable butler, the cynical coroner, the tough police sergeant, the police stooge the jealous "other woman," and always the ever-wise detective who "sees all, knows all and tells all."

Costumes, too, go in for many ghostly results. The long black cape is a favorite one.

Settings embrace every conceivable locale of society which might result in fright-producing atmosphere—abandoned houses, cemeteries, little frequented alleys, dark caves, and lonely islands.

With it all, story construction always follows the well-known groove. The long exposition introducing a weird locale, the odd-assortment of characters, the unusual crime or the complicated situation before the murder is committed. The false leads or mis-directing sign posts. The strong antagonistic forces. The multitudinous conflicts. The flattening of the finally guilty party. The mental "superman" and his confidant, the comic cop. The recapitulation of methods used in solving the crime, hurried for fear the audience will pick flaws in the denouement.

Of course, the camera often blends these components into an acceptable whole by using many pan shots and travel shots from long view to closeup in order to increase the over-all effect. Tempo, achieved by sudden cutting and short clips, aids the staccato mood and gives the spectator a feeling of uneasiness, of fear, of impending danger.

These ingredients can be replete with dramatic intensity and suspense when presented and directed by such men as Alfred Hitchcock (*The Thirty-nine Steps*, *The Lady Vanishes*, *Rebecca*, *Spellbound*), Robert Siodmak (*The Suspect*, *The Spiral Staircase*, now directing *The Dark Mirror*), Otto Preminger (*Laura*, *Fallen Angel*), and Jacques Tourneur (*The Cat People*, *The Leopard Man*, *I Walked With a Zombie*).

## Current Mystery Films

*Beast with Five Fingers, The* (Warners) with Robert Alda, Andrea King.  
*Bedlam* (R.K.O.-Radio).  
*Big Sleep* (Warners) with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall.  
*Blue Dahlia, The* (Paramount) with Alan Ladd, Veronica Lake, William Bendix.  
*Brighton Strangler, The* (R.K.O.-Radio) with John Loder, Rose Hobart.  
*Brute Man, The* (Universal) with Rondo Hatton, Jane Adams.  
*California* (Paramount) with Ray Milland, Barbara Stanwyck.  
*Case of the Ghost Who Wasn't There, The* (Republic).  
*Cat Creeps, The* (Universal) with Lois Collier, Noah Beery, Jr., Rose Hobart.  
*Cat-Man of Paris, The* (Republic) with Carl Esmond, Lenore Aubert.  
*Chant of the Voodoo* (Columbia).  
*Charlie Chan in Alcatraz* (Republic) with Sidney Toler.  
*Crackup* (R.K.O.-Radio).  
*Crime Doctor's Warning, The* (Columbia) with Warner Baxter, Dusty Anderson.  
*Crime of the Century* (Republic) with Stephanie Bachelor, Michael Brown.  
*Dark Alibi* (Monogram) with Sidney Toler, Benson Fong.  
*Dark Corner, The* (20th Century-Fox).  
*Deadline at Dawn* (R.K.O.-Radio) with Susan Hayward, Paul Lukas, Bill Williams.  
*Devil Bat's Daughter* (P.R.C.) with Rosemary Laplanche, Michael Hall.  
*Devil's Mask* (Columbia).  
*Dressed to Kill* (Universal).  
*Evil Genius, The* (Paramount).  
*Falcon in San Francisco* (R.K.O.-Radio) with Tom Conway, Rita Corday.  
*Falcon's Alibi, The* (R.K.O.-Radio).  
*Fear* (Republic) with Peter Cookson, Warren Williams.  
*French Key, The* (Republic) with Evelyn Ankers, Albert Dekker.  
*Genius, Inc.* (R.K.O.-Radio).  
*Ghost Goes Wild* (Republic).  
*Head, The* (Columbia) second in series  
*I Love A Mystery* with Jim Bannon.  
*House of Horrors, The* (Universal) with Kent Taylor, Virginia Grey, Robert Lowery.

*Lie Detector, The* (R.K.O.-Radio).  
*Man I Love, The* (Warners) with Ida Lupino, Robert Alda.  
*Mr. District Attorney* (Columbia).  
*Murder in the Music Hall* (Republic) with Vera Hrubá Ralston, William Marshall.  
*Murder Is My Business* (P.R.C.).  
*Murder Is Unpredictable* (Columbia) with Richard Dix.  
*Mysterious Intruder* (Columbia).  
*No Time For Crime* (Signal).  
*Notorious Lone Wolf, The* (Columbia) with Gerald Mohr, Janis Carter.  
*Postman Always Rings Twice, The* (MGM) with Lana Turner, John Garfield.  
*Puzzle For Puppets* (Republic) from novel by Patrick Quentin.  
*Shadow Returns, The* (Republic).  
*Shadow's Shadow, The* (Republic).  
*She-Wolf of London* (Universal) with June Lockhart, Jan Wiley.  
*Shock* (20th Century-Fox) with Lynn Bari, Vincent Price, Frank Latimore.  
*So Dark the Night* (Columbia) with Micheline Cheirel, Steven Geray, Paul Marion.  
*Somewhere in the Night* (20th Century-Fox).  
*Specter of the Rose* (Republic) with Ilan Kwiiov, Viola Essen.  
*Spider Woman Strikes Back, The* (Universal) with Gale Sondergaard, Kirby Grant, Brenda Joyce, Rondo Hatton.  
*Strange Love of Martha Ivers, The* (Paramount).  
*Suspense* (Monogram) with Belita, Albert Dekker.  
*Terror by Night* (Universal), another in *Sherlock Holmes* series with Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce.  
*Three Strangers* (Warners) with Sydney Greenstreet, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Peter Lorre.  
*They Made Me a Killer* (Pine-Thomas for Paramount release).  
*Traffic in Crime* (Republic).  
*Truth About Murder, The* (R.K.O.-Radio).  
*Valley of the Zombies* (Republic).  
*Walls Came Tumbling Down, The* (Columbia) with Lee Bowman, Marguerite Chapman.

GIVEN painstaking production, direction and a cast of talented straight players, these values can be twisted into a continuity that holds an audience enthralled. Such a film is Paramount's latest, *The Blue Dahlia*, starring Alan Ladd, Veronica Lake and William Bendix. In this cast, much of the final effect is due to the masterful original writing of Raymond Chandler, who also wrote the popular *Murder, My Sweet* and the future films, *The Big Sleep*, *Lady in the Lake*, and *High Window*. There is no similarity, however, between *The Blue Dahlia* and *Murder, My Sweet* except the similarity of expert craftsmanship—the method of telling the story, of slipping in surprises where they will do the most good, of stopping a sequence just short of the point to which less gifted writers would carry it, of distributing the narrative responsibility sagely among dialogue, situation, and incident.

Another startling forthcoming film is *Specter of the Rose*, written and directed by Ben Hecht for Republic release. New to the field of direction, Mr. Hecht, however, has had an amazing background for

entrance into the profession. At twelve he made his debut as a concert violinist at Orchestra Hall in Chicago, and at fifteen he was a trapeze artist with the Costello Brothers' tent show. Two years later he became a reporter for the Chicago Daily Journal and still later for the Daily News. With Charles McCarthy he won the Pulitzer Prize for the stage play, *The Front Page*, and an Academy Award for the best original screen story of 1935, *The Scoundrel*. *Lady in the Dark* and *Winged Victory* are his best-known plays. Last year he wrote the screenplays for *Spellbound*, *Notorious* (now being filmed by Hitchcock) and for *Sarah Bernhardt*, soon to go into production. Also, he tossed off three radio plays and had three books published, *A Guide for the Bedeviled*, *I Hate Actors* and a book of short stories.

*Specter of the Rose* is another film in the current cycle of psychological-murder-mystery-melodramas. It tells the story of a mad dancer, Sanine, who loves a slender and lovely little ballerina, Haidi. They marry and share an idyllic honeymoon in his apartment and, for a brief period, only touches of his madness bring to him

# Tally-Ho!

An interview with Tally Brockman of the Chicago company of *Dear Ruth*

By ONENVA PYLVALA

Formerly Thespian Troupe Sponsor, Merrill, Wisconsin, High School.

UPON first entering dressing room No. 7 at the Harris Theatre in Chicago, one sees nothing unusual or different about it from any other actress' dressing room—the same grease paint and lip rouge, the same mirrors, and the same wardrobe trunks. Then suddenly a huge autographed picture of Van Johnson seems to loom forth from the mirrors, and pictures of jitterbugs and teen-agers are seen gracing the walls, and you know this is the dressing room of a bobby-soxer actress. And you are right, for when the occupant of the room appears, you are face to face with vivacious and diminutive Tally Brockman, fifteen year old featured actress in the Chicago company of *Dear Ruth*.

*Dear Ruth* is one of the most sparkling and clean-cut comedies to be presented in Chicago. Responsible for much of the play's success is Tally Brockman, who portrays the younger sister, Miriam, the adolescent who does her bit in the war effort by corresponding with the boys in the service.

Tally Brockman is a veteran of stage and radio at the ripe old age of fifteen. Her theatrical career began when she was four and a half years old in Daniel Frohman's production of *Blue Butterfly*, which was presented in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. She studied dancing, and she was presented in Miss Van Dyke's Ballet Group doing panto-

visions of his evil self dancing out from the shadows, clad in his rose ballet costume and wielding a murderous knife. With their friends, the two plan the production of a magnificent ballet; it is a brilliant success and Sanine is hailed as another Nijinsky.

Meanwhile, from an old teacher, La Sylph, Haidi learns that her husband is being hunted by the police for the murder of his first wife, and together they contrive to protect him from arrest. Finally his madness once again possesses him completely and, in the whirling movements of his dance, he leaps from the hotel window to his death.

Producer-writer-director Hecht has cast the story with unknown players except for Judith Anderson who plays La Sylph, a wondrous and famed ballerina in her glamorous youth, and Michael Chekhov (seen in *Spellbound* as the wise old psychiatrist) who plays the impressario backing Saine's production. As he expresses the theme, "It tells of the drunken side of the arts. No one succeeds . . . life is the only villain."

May Issue: *The Western Film*.

mimic dances. Modeling for John Powers also took up her time until she was eight years old. At that time she was auditioned by Madge Tucker for a radio program. Among the radio programs on which she has appeared are *Reg'lar Fellers*, *The Armstrong Theatre of the Air*, with Mady Christians, *We the People*, *Let's Pretend*, directed by Nila Mack, *School of the Air*, and *Behind the Mike*. More recently, she appeared in a television broadcast for the DuPont Corporation.

Tally, like the character which she portrays in *Dear Ruth*, has done her bit for the War. She is very proud of the pin she received from the American Theatre Wing, an award which is given to those theatre people who have contributed in a worth while war project. She was the narrator for the War Bond Drives at the Wing, the organization which sponsored the famous Stage Door Canteen. Her favorite activity was jitterbug dancing which she did to entertain the servicemen at the Canteen.

Tally's first role in a Broadway play was in *Mexican Mural*, in which she played a child. Libby Holman, who played her mother, was the star of the show. In 1943, when Tally was 12 years old, she played in *Lady in the Dark*, which starred Gertrude Lawrence. Two years later she played in John Golden's production, *Laughing Water*.

Last year was an eventful one for Tally Brockman. She appeared first in *Foolish Notion* with Tallulah Bankhead in Washington, D. C. It was while she was playing Tallulah's daughter in the Philip Barry play that she acquired her new stage name. Prior to this time, Tally was known as Terry Dicks, and Miss Bankhead suggested the new name. Miss Bankhead gave Tally part of her first name, which is taken from Tallulah, and Brockman is Miss Bankhead's second name. Therefore, Tally has a challenge in living up to the famous name which has been bestowed upon her by a great actress, and from all observations, she is doing justice to the honor. In August, 1945, she joined the cast of *Dear Ruth* in Chicago, and that brings the summary of Tally's stage career up to date.

SO OFTEN readers want to know how young actors and actresses keep up their academic studies while appearing in stage and radio production. Tally, like hundreds of other teen-agers who appear on the stage, attends the Children's Professional School in New York City. This school is strictly an academic insti-



Tally Brockman as she appears in *Dear Ruth* as Miriam, the adolescent member of the family.

tution, and not a school of dramatics or speech, as so many people erroneously believe. The students who attend are all children who are appearing on the stage or radio. The standards of education at the school are unusually high. They must maintain a high scholastic average, or expulsion from both the production in which they appear and the school may be their penalty. While Tally is on the road,



her assignments are sent to her monthly. She is tutored by an approved teacher, and once a week she must complete her required assignments and send them to the school.

Any reader who thinks that an actress lives a life of ease is sadly mistaken, for six or seven hours a day of concentrated study are required for satisfactory completion of the assigned work. Tally is a senior this year. She attends school five days a week.

The Children's Professional School includes grades from the kindergarten through the senior year in high school. Some of the well-known graduates of the school are Penny Singleton, Milton Berle, Andrea King, Nancy Walker (*Best Foot Forward* and *On the Town*), Martha Raye, Peter Donald, Ann Thomas, Eddie Ryan, Ruby Keeler, and the red-headed boys from the Broadway success, *Life With Father*. Tally's dramatic training was done with Norman Brace and Irene Becque in New York City.

Tally's day is well-filled with her career and her studies, but she still finds time for recreation. She likes to dance, and she attends movies. She thinks Gene Krupa is "out of this world!", and her favorite sport, her favorite recreation, and her favorite amusement is jitterbugging! When fellow actors pass through Chicago, she frequently meets them, but she also finds great fun in meeting new friends in the towns where she performs. After a play has been running as long as *Dear Ruth*, the cast does not hold rehearsals often, except for a special reason or occasion. Tally's mother and father travel with her, so she is not lacking family life. Thus far her family has been lucky in being able to find apartments, so Tally has lived a normal life since she has been playing Miriam. Participation in radio programs has also taken up some of her leisure time. During the five months of the Chicago run, she has taken part in many programs.

The subject of stage fright is one which interests most amateur actors, for there are only a lucky few who have not experienced it at some time or another in their theatrical endeavors. Tally is one of those lucky few, for even on opening night, she feels a keen excitement instead of stage fright. She loves the excitement of opening night, and calls it "electric something in the air."

In answer to the question of actors' attitudes toward newspaper critics and their criticisms, Tally said she reads them very carefully, for she feels that the critics represent the general public in their opinions of her work, and only by criticism can she improve her technique and characterization.

Many actors object to Saturday matinee audiences, but Tally likes them, because the audiences are made up chiefly of bobby-soxers and servicemen, all of whom are very appreciative of the play and the actors. Tally not only portrays a



Scene from the Christmas play, *Good King Wenceslaus*, staged at the Academy of the Holy Angels (Thespian Troupe 568), Minneapolis, Minn. Directed by Sister Charitas.

typical bobby-soxer in the play, but in real life as well, she looks, acts, and talks like the "huba-huba" youngsters of her own age, so naturally she would like her matinee audiences.

Being young and being interested in people, Tally enjoys moving from town to town, even to playing one-night stands. She finds opening nights in new towns

very exciting, and looks forward to each one with great expectancy. Because she is interested in people, she likes to give autographs. She feels flattered to be approached for an autograph or a picture, and judging from the servicemen and bobby-soxers who linger at the stage door each night, she has many admirers.

Tally is very sympathetic to young people who want to act. She thinks all potential actors and actresses should be encouraged to follow their hearts to Broadway. However, her advice is very sound. First of all, she stresses the need for a good education, this being very important. Experience in summer stock is very important, too, because a student gets excellent training in stock companies, and the experience is invaluable to a would-be actor or actress.

Some "don'ts" that Tally suggests are also worth remembering. Don't become discouraged. The road is difficult, but discouragement is an actor's worst enemy. Don't expect too much from the people around you. You must do the work yourself. Don't let the competition scare you away. If you think you have talent, competition makes your efforts more worth while. If you can't stand competition, you had better give up the idea of acting as a career.

"You must work hard," she concludes thoughtfully. "Remember, no one is indispensable, and somewhere there is a better actor or actress to take your place. There is no room for conceit and snobbery in the theatre."

Tally lives up to the ideals and principles which she sets forth for others. That is why she will go on to greater accomplishments in the theatre.

### Children's Theatre Conference

**SESSIONS** on playwriting, play production, radio, film, creative dramatics, and puppetry are included in the conference scheduled by the Children's Theatre Committee of the American Educational Theatre Association for August 2-5 of this year at Seattle, Washington. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the Seattle Writers' Conference also scheduled for August 2-5.

Among those who will appear on the children's conference are Virginia Lee Comer, George Savage, Charlotte Chorpennig, Hazel Robertson, Sara Spencer Campbell, Gloria Chandler, and Winifred Ward.

An exhibition is planned as part of the conference to include production books, photographs, scene and costume designs. Children's Theatres and other producers of plays for young people are invited to send materials for the exhibit as follows:

- Class I—Production books (limited to one book).
- Class II—Photographs of productions.
- Class III—Costume plates (limited to five plates).
- Class IV—Scene designs (productions presented in auditoriums).
- Class V—Scene designs (productions to be trouped).

Costume plates, scene designs and photographs should be drawn or mounted on illustration board 20" x 12". Each item sent to the conference should be properly labeled, giving the name of the production and the sponsoring group. Materials should be shipped by express to Mrs. Minette Proctor, Adult Education, University of Washington, Seattle, Wash. The deadline is July 15th.



# Forced Exit\*

A Comedy in One Act

By MEYER HANSON

Washington, D. C.

## CAST:

**Willoughby Hopkins**—A paunchy little man with tiny moustache, quite bald, wears rimmed glasses. His voice is light, not very loud, and he mumbles when he forgets to take his pipe out of his mouth before speaking.

**Carolyn Hopkins**—Willoughby's wife. She is taller than Willoughby, and much more decisive in action. Carolyn is about 35, somewhat on the scrawny side. She is very sure of herself and it shows in her voice and manner.

**The Intruder**—A heavy-set man wearing dark clothes and a black slouch hat pulled over his eyes.

## SCENE:

The Hopkins' ground floor bedroom. There are the usual bedroom furnishings—twin beds with night table in between, lamp and telephone on night table, dresser, vanity, odd chairs, tables, etc. One large window faces audience to left of center, and another window is at center right. On left is door opening into dining room (door remains open) and another door leading into closet. The room is quite dimly lighted by a ceiling fixture and the lamp on the night table.

## TIME:

9:30 P. M. Any Payday.

## AT CURTAIN RISE:

Willoughby is seen partially undressed getting ready for bed. He is in his undershirt, suspenders dangling over the sides of his trousers, and walks in stocking feet.

Carolyn, wearing apron over house dress, comes in from dining room carrying glass of milk on small tray. She places tray on one of the odd tables.

Carolyn: Now be sure and drink your milk, Willoughby. You haven't been sleeping very well lately.

Willoughby: I think it's the milk, Duckie. (Seriously.) It makes me burp and wakes me right up out of a sound sleep!

Carolyn: I sprinkled some salt in it. (Coaxing.) It's good for you, darling. Come, drink it.

Willoughby: I will, I will. Pretty soon, Duckie.

Carolyn goes to vanity and rearranges articles on top.

Carolyn: Willoughby, I think it's about time that we had a dog.

Willoughby picks up pipe from table and goes through elaborate cleaning motions.

Willoughby (Looking up from pipe-cleaning.): Dog?

Carolyn: Just a little fox terrier, darling.

Willoughby: But if we had one, Duckie, you'd have me out walking him this very minute. I don't think we want a dog.

Carolyn: But he'd be company for me. And protection, too.

Willoughby: Protection? I can protect you!

Carolyn: But suppose a— a prowler comes in at night—a dog would wake us, and— and chase him out—

Willoughby (Bravely.): I'm not afraid of any prowler! I'd know how to handle him, Duckie, don't you worry. They showed us when I was an air raid warden. (Nonchalantly.) Judo, you know.

Carolyn: But— but supposing he were bigger than you—

Willoughby: Wouldn't make a bit of difference. The bigger they come, the harder they fall, you know. I'd just grasp him by one arm, give a twist, and there he'd be,

flat on his back. Here, I'll show you, Duckie.

Willoughby puts down pipe and goes to Carolyn who has moved to front center.

Carolyn: But darling, I'm afraid—

Willoughby: I won't hurt you a bit. See, all I do is this—

He grasps Carolyn's wrist, takes a few practice stances, and then gives a twist with a turn of his body.

But it is Willoughby himself who lands flat on his back. Carolyn, with amazement, stands looking down at him.

Carolyn: Wasn't it the prowler who was supposed to be down?

Willoughby groans.

Carolyn (Anxiously.): Are you hurt, darling?

Willoughby (Weakly.): I—I slipped. (Groans again.)

Carolyn helps him up. He rubs his back and side where he'd fallen.

Willoughby: I'm a little out of practice. (Stronger.) But you see how I'd handle any prowler, don't you, Duckie?

Carolyn: Yes, yes, I see. (Soothingly.) Now drink your milk, darling, and go to bed. We'll talk about a dog tomorrow.

Carolyn leaves.

Willoughby attempts to flex his muscles, groans. He takes pipe and jabs it between his teeth. He picks up glass of milk, takes a sip, makes a face. Then goes to window, raises it a bit more, throws milk outside, and wearing satisfied expression, returns empty glass to table.

As Willoughby turns back to window and faces audience, a slouch-hatted figure is seen rising outside the window from beneath the sill. The stranger's black hat and shoulders and white-streaked where, unknowingly, Willoughby has emptied his glass. The man outside wipes his face with the back of his hand, shakes fist at Willoughby's back, and disappears.

Willoughby (With unlighted pipe in mouth. Calling.): Did my shirts come back from the laundry, Duckie?

Carolyn (From dining room. Calling.): I can't hear a word you say, Willoughby.

Willoughby (Still with pipe in mouth, speaking very loudly.): Did my shirts come back from the laundry?

Carolyn (From dining room.): It won't do any good to shout, darling. I never can understand you when you have that pipe in your mouth.

Willoughby (Angrily removing pipe from mouth and gesticulating with it as he shouts.): I only wanted to know if I have a clean shirt to wear tomorrow!

Carolyn (Appearing for brief moment in doorway.): Just look in your dresser drawer, darling. You have plenty.

Carolyn disappears into dining room.

Willoughby jabs pipe back between teeth, strides to dresser drawer, opens it and studies contents.

Carolyn (From dining room. Calling.): Did you get to the bank with your pay, Willoughby?

Willoughby (With pipe in mouth.): I forgot all about it, Duckie.

Carolyn (From dining room.): I can't understand you.

Willoughby (Angrily removing pipe and setting it down on table with sharp sound.): I forgot all about going to the bank, I said.

Carolyn (From dining room.): You should have taken a few minutes off during the day.

Willoughby: I was too busy.

He takes clean shirt from dresser drawer, unbuttons it, shakes it out, examines it.

Willoughby: Carolyn, they put starch in my collar again!

Carolyn (Appears in doorway again.): I told them not to.

Willoughby: I'm going to tell them myself! I'll tell them a few things!

Carolyn: Make sure to deposit your pay tomorrow, won't you, darling? You might lose it, carrying it around.

Willoughby: I never lose anything, you know that, Duckie.

He drapes the shirt on a chair back.

Carolyn: Well, you remember that watch— (Stops as if she decides not to bring up the matter.) Well, anyway, be careful. You hear about all kinds of holdups nowadays. (In doorway, on way out.) You'd better leave a little money here for me, darling. I want to go shopping tomorrow.

Willoughby: Of course. Will ten dollars be enough?

Carolyn: Yes, plenty. There are just a few things we need for the house.

She disappears into dining room.

Willoughby reaches into back trousers pocket, takes out wallet. He opens it, stares at it a moment, and then frenziedly leafs through it. It becomes apparent that he has lost his money. Carolyn appears in the doorway, and Willoughby hurriedly hides the wallet behind him. Carolyn is bringing a small mahogany silverware cabinet into the room.

Carolyn: I'm going to keep our silverware in the bedroom tonight.

Willoughby stuffs wallet into hip pocket hastily so Carolyn will not see it.

Willoughby: What for?

Carolyn: I don't want the pants-burglar to get it.

Willoughby is stealthily looking around the room as if searching for his wallet.

Willoughby: Pants-burglar? What's a pants-burglar?

Carolyn: That's what the newspapers call him. He's a man who steals things from people's pockets while they're asleep. He comes in through windows. Didn't you read about him in the newspaper?

Willoughby: I guess I didn't pay any attention to it. (Thoughtfully.) Pants-burglar, eh? (Puts hand over hip pocket.) Pants-burglar—well, well— (Mutters.) Maybe he could serve a purpose—

Carolyn: Whatever do you mean, serve a purpose?

Willoughby: Did I say that? I mean he'll serve—er—serve a term, of course. In—in prison, you know.

Carolyn (Sniffing disdainfully.): If they catch him.

Willoughby: That's right, they have to catch him first.

Carolyn (With finger over mouth as if pondering where to hide silverware.): I wonder if the closet would be a good place to put this.

She goes to closet, opens door, looks inside, shakes head, closes door.

Willoughby (Anxious for her to leave.): Oh, just put it in a dresser drawer.

Carolyn: That's exactly where the pants-burglar would look first! (Pause while she ponders.) Oh, I know—I'll put it in the laundry hamper.

Carolyn goes to pink laundry hamper standing near closet door, pulls out soiled clothes, puts in silverware, puts clothes back, closes hamper.

Carolyn: There! He'll never think of looking there!

Willoughby: You sound as if he's an invited guest.

Carolyn: He doesn't have to be invited! And the police say he's operating in this vicinity! Mr. Dalrymple lost over \$50 last night, according to the paper. And his address is over in the next block, too.

Willoughby: Is that so!

Carolyn: It was in tonight's paper, right on the front page. You'd have seen it if you read something besides the funnies.

Willoughby (Protestingly.): I like the funnies.

Carolyn leaves.

\* Forced Exit may be produced by amateur drama groups upon payment of a royalty fee of \$5.00 to Meyer Hanson, 32 Chesapeake St., S. W., Washington 20, D. C.

Willoughby immediately gets down on his knees as if to look under bed.

Carolyn returns unexpectedly, talking as she enters. She carries a water glass.

Carolyn: It was the pants-burglar made me think we needed a dog—(Breaks off.) Did you lose something, darling?

Willoughby jumps up.

Willoughby: Just—just a—a pipe cleaner. I found it.

Carolyn places the water glass on the night table and leaves again.

Willoughby immediately gets down on hands and knees and searches all around the room, under beds, etc. He gets up finally and with shaking hands fills his pipe with tobacco, tamps it with his thumb, lights the tobacco, and puffs furiously, filling the room with smoke. He takes out his wallet and leafs through it again.

Carolyn returns.

Carolyn (Horried.): Willoughby Hopkins! Are you smoking that dreadful pipe in our bedroom?

Willoughby (Trying to hide pipe behind his back.): Was I smoking.

He makes motions as if to fan smoke out of room with hands.

Carolyn: You know you were.

She strides to window, raises shade, raises window wide from the bottom.

Carolyn: You know I can't sleep with such a heavy smell of tobacco in the room.

Willoughby (Fanning air with hands.): I just wasn't thinking.

Carolyn goes to closet, takes out colorful robe and night clothes.

Carolyn: Close the window when you get the smoke cleared out. (Coughs.) I simply can't stand your pipe tobacco.

Carolyn leaves.

Willoughby fans the air a bit, then goes to closet and takes out long white night-shirt. He struggles putting shirt on over his head and then removes trousers. He places trousers on chair nearest window. He looks from chair to window as if measuring the distance a pants-burglar would have to travel. He arranges trousers on chair that the outline of the wallet shows plainly through the hip pocket. He even pulls the wallet out about an inch.

He then pulls the window down to about six inches from the bottom, pulls the shade down that distance and then as an after-thought opens the window from the top slightly.

He crawls into bed farthest away from the window.

Carolyn comes in wearing robe and with her hair under a net. She goes to vanity to give her face a few finishing touches. She notices window.

Carolyn: It's a good thing I'm around to notice things. Look at that window!

Willoughby (Rising on elbow.): But that's the way I want the window, Carolyn!

Carolyn: To make it easier for a prowler? I'm going to shut it!

Willoughby: No, no, leave it just that way. That's why I haven't been sleeping so well lately. No ventilation.

Carolyn: W-what?

Willoughby: I—I read it in tonight's paper. It says for proper ventilation, leave the window open at the top so the warm air will go out, and open at the bottom so the fresh air will come in.

Carolyn: Are you sure you didn't read that in the funnies?

Willoughby: Now, Duckie—

Carolyn: But just look where you've left your wallet! (Points to trousers on chair.) Willoughby Hopkins, you ought to know better!

Willoughby: It's where I've been leaving it for the past five years! I like it there!

Carolyn: But it's putting temptation in somebody's way. I'll just hang your trousers on this other chair for tonight—

Carolyn starts to move trousers but Willoughby stops her.

Willoughby: Now you leave those trousers

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there, Carolyn! Supposing I have to get up in a hurry? I want to know where my trousers are!

Carolyn: This once they can be somewhere else.

Willoughby: This once might be exactly an emergency when I might need my trousers. Just leave them there and turn out the light.

Carolyn: I still think it would be better if you put them in the closet.

Willoughby: Oh, come to bed. Nobody's going to bother us.

Carolyn: You go to sleep. I want to read another chapter in this book.

Carolyn goes to wall switch and snaps off ceiling light, first however putting on reading lamp over easy chair close to the bed. She then settles herself in the chair with light shining over her shoulder. She holds book in lap.

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Carolyn: I'd feel safer if we had a dog.  
Willoughby (Sleepily.): Sometime maybe we'll have one.

Willoughby breathes evenly and deeply and sounds as if he is already snoring.

Carolyn: Mrs. Wheeler is going to get a new permanent tomorrow, Willoughby.

Willoughby (Very sleepily.): Uh-huh.

Carolyn: Permanents last a long time.

Willoughby: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: But they don't last forever.

Willoughby: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: It's been eight months since I've had one.

Willoughby: Uh-huh.

Carolyn: I think I should get one, don't you, darling?

Willoughby: Uh-huh.

Carolyn (Happily.): Oh, darling, I was afraid we couldn't spare the money just now! I'll make an appointment tomorrow.

Willoughby (Coming awake at the sound of money.): Appointment for what?

Carolyn: The one we've just been talking about. For a permanent, of course.

Willoughby: What permanent?

Carolyn: You just said I could have a permanent wave!

Willoughby: I didn't say anything about a permanent wave—or did I? I don't remember. I was half-asleep.

Carolyn (Pouting.): You said I could have one and I want one.

Willoughby: Can't it wait a little while?

Carolyn: And let the Wheelers think we can't afford a permanent as well as they can?

Willoughby: Oh, bother the Wheelers! I wish you'd let me sleep.

Willoughby snores.

Carolyn: Are you asleep, darling?

Willoughby snores again. And again.

Carolyn leans over to watch him as he sleeps. After a brief pause during which Willoughby snores at regular intervals, Carolyn tiptoes over to Willoughby's trousers, extracts wallet, and holding it in one hand, taps it against a finger as if pondering what to do with it.

She finally walks to the hamper, pulls out clothes, hides wallet in bottom, replaces clothes, and stealthily returns to her chair.

She starts reading book, yawns, turns a page. She yawns again. Her chin drops, her head sags. She sleeps.

Willoughby rises half out of bed, watches her for a brief moment, decides she is asleep, gets out of bed, tiptoes straight to hamper as if he has witnessed what Carolyn has done, locates wallet inside of hamper. He puts it under his pillow, crawls back into bed, and presently snores.

An eerie hand reaches in from outside the window facing the audience, carefully moves the shade up, raises window. Then a leg steps over the sill followed by the rest of THE INTRUDER.

The intruder advances stealthily to the hamper, as if he has witnessed what had gone on in the room, removes silverware box, tucks it under one arm, goes to Willoughby's bed and gets wallet from under pillow, puts it in pants pocket and then tiptoes toward window.

Carolyn wakes, screams. There is a crash as the intruder drops the silverware.

Carolyn (Screaming.): Willoughby! Help! It's the pants-burglar!

Willoughby comes awake to give one look, then dives under covers.

Carolyn jumps, seizes intruder from rear as he jumps headforemost through the window. His pants come off and Carolyn is left holding them outstretched in one hand.

Carolyn (Loudly and severely.): Willoughby Hopkins! And you such a brave, light, sleeper!

Willoughby emerges trembling from under the bed covers.

Willoughby: Is—is he gone? What—who was it?

Carolyn: It was the pants-burglar!

Willoughby (Shaking visibly.): How do



you k-know?

Carolyn (*Loudly and triumphantly*): Because I have his pants!

Willoughby: Pants! What pants? (*With mounting excitement.*) How about my pants? My—my wallet?

Willoughby *hurriedly searches pocket in his trousers.*

Carolyn: Don't worry about your wallet. I had sense enough to hide it with the silverware. (*Claps hand over mouth in dismay.*) But he found the silverware!

Willoughby *rushes to hamper and flings the clothes out of it. He glances toward his pillow as he speaks with mock excitement.*

Willoughby: There's no wallet here. Carolyn *searches through pockets of pants-burglar's pants and triumphantly brings out Willoughby's wallet.*

Carolyn: Here it is—Willoughby (*Amazed. Glances toward pillow.*): Is—is that m-my wallet—let me see it! He *seizes it, quickly looks inside.*

Willoughby: The money's gone! It's empty! Carolyn, *searching other pockets in pants, brings out a roll of money.*

Carolyn: Here it is, in this other pocket—*Dazedly, hands shaking, Willoughby takes the money. He cannot believe it.*

Carolyn: Is it all there, Willoughby? Willoughby *counts it slowly.*

Willoughby: There's—there's more. Carolyn: The pants-burglar must have visited a few other places before he came here. You take out what's ours, Willoughby. The police can have the rest.

Carolyn *drops the pants on the floor near the window as she walks towards phone.*

Carolyn: I'm going to call the police right now.

*The phone rings loudly as she approaches it. She lifts it and makes monosyllabic answers. When she puts down the phone she turns slowly to Willoughby and points a finger at him.*

Carolyn: Willoughby Hopkins, how much money did you have in your wallet when you came home tonight?

Willoughby (*Wetting lips nervously.*): My—my pay, of course. In the p-pay envelope.

Carolyn: And it was part of what the pants-burglar had in his pocket?

Willoughby (*Stumblingly.*): It—it has to be—I—I—of course—Who was that call from?

Carolyn: That call was from the night watchman at your office building.

Willoughby: Old Bill Hutchins calling me! Is something wrong? Fire, maybe? I'll have to go.

Willoughby *rushes to his pants and starts getting into them.*

Carolyn: You're not going anywhere. He called just to tell you he was going through your office on his usual rounds and found a pay envelope full of money on the floor near your desk. It has your name on it.

Willoughby (*Very relievedly.*): Good old Bill Hutchins!

*Behind them the arm of the intruder reaches through the window, grabs his pants, and yanks them outside.*

Carolyn (*Sarcastically.*): First you never lose things, then you're such a light sleeper, and so brave—

Willoughby: What we need is a good dog around here.

Carolyn: A fox terrier—

Willoughby: Anything you want—

Carolyn: And I'll get an extra-special permanent. They cost only \$5 more—

Willoughby *looks at roll of money in his hand.*

Willoughby: Good gosh, just think of that poor burglar running around without any pants on.

*They both look toward the window where Carolyn had dropped the pants.*

Willoughby (*Screeching.*): NO—no pants! *They look at each other. Willoughby faints in Carolyn's arms as*

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

## Directory of Leading Drama Festivals and Contests of 1946

### ALABAMA

FIFTH ANNUAL DRAMA FESTIVAL, sponsored by Alabama College. Alabama College, Montevallo, February 1-3. Dr. Walter H. Trumbauer, director.

### CONNECTICUT

STATE DRAMA FESTIVAL, sponsored by the dramatics teachers of the State. State finals at New Haven Teachers College, March 30. Mrs. Helen Skinner, director.

### FLORIDA

ANNUAL DRAMA FESTIVAL FOR HIGH SCHOOLS, sponsored by the Florida Speech Teachers Association. Stetson University, Deland, March 8-9. Mildred E. Murphy, State Chairman.

### ILLINOIS

HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH FESTIVAL, sponsored by the Illinois High School Association. State Finals at the University of Illinois, Urbana, April 12-13. Directed by the Extension Department, University of Illinois.

### IOWA

STATE SPEECH AND DRAMA FESTIVAL, sponsored by the Speech Department of the State University of Iowa. University of Iowa, Iowa City, March 27-30. W. A. Dozier, director.

### MAINE

STATE DRAMA FESTIVAL, sponsored by Bowdoin College. State finals at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, April 13. Lawrence Stuart, director.

### MASSACHUSETTS

STATE DRAMA FESTIVAL, sponsored by the State Dramatics Teachers Association. Swampscott High School, April 12-13. Supt. Mansur in charge.

### MINNESOTA

ONE-ACT PLAY FESTIVAL, sponsored by the Minnesota Association of Teachers of Speech and the Speech Department of the University of Minnesota. University of Minnesota Theatre, May 4.

### NORTH DAKOTA

JUNIOR PLAYMAKER FESTIVAL, sponsored by the Dakota Playmakers of the University of North Dakota. University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, May 15 (tentative). E. W. Schonberger, director.

### OHIO

DRAMA AND POETRY READING FESTIVAL, sponsored by the Ohio High School Speech League, Ohio State University. Ohio State University, April 27. Bert Emsley, director.

### RHODE ISLAND

ONE-ACT PLAY FESTIVAL, sponsored by Brown University. Brown University, Providence, April 5, 6. Daniel Turner, president of Rhode Island directors of drama and speech.

### TENNESSEE

INTERSCHOLASTIC LITERARY LEAGUE ONE-ACT PLAY CONTEST, sponsored by the University of Tennessee. Finals at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, April 26. F. C. Lowry, Executive Secretary.

### TEXAS

TEXAS STATE ONE-ACT PLAY CONTEST, sponsored by the University Interscholastic League. Finals at the University of Texas, Austin, May 3. R. J. Kidd, acting director.

### UTAH

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA FESTIVAL, sponsored by the Department of Speech, Brigham Young University. Provo, April 4-5-6. Dr. T. Earl Pardoe, director.

### VIRGINIA

ONE-ACT PLAY CONTEST, sponsored by the Virginia High School Literary and Athletic League, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, May 2, 3, 4. Richard R. Fletcher, director.

### WEST VIRGINIA

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL WEST VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA FESTIVAL, sponsored by The National Thespian Society with the cooperation of the Department of Speech, West Virginia University. State Festival at West Virginia University, May 10-11. Ernest Bavelly, director.

### WISCONSIN

WISCONSIN STATE DRAMATIC CONTEST, sponsored by the Wisconsin High School Forensic Association. State contest at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, December, 1946. Directed by Leslie E. Brown, secretary, Forensic Association.

### WYOMING

SPEECH FESTIVAL, sponsored by the University of Wyoming. University of Wyoming, Laramie, April 5. Velma Linford, chairman of speech teachers.

### INTER-STATE

#### NEW ENGLAND FESTIVAL

NEW ENGLAND DRAMA DAY FESTIVAL, sponsored by dramatics teachers from New England States. Festival at the Spaulding, N. H., High School, April 26-27. Florence Keene in charge. Barbara Wellington, president of Council.

# THEATER on BROADWAY

by Paul Myers

264 Lexington Ave., New York City.

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Request should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

THE New York theatre of the past several weeks has abounded in most impressive and prepossessing entries which have revealed various deficiencies upon closer examination. The disappointments have been of varying degrees, ranging from dissatisfaction with one or two details to unhappiness and discontent over an entire production. Some of the best artists on the theatre's roster have been involved, but in almost all cases they have not given us of their best or have been seen at the fullest advantage. The period has been one of dashed hopes, and has left one with the feeling that something (which remains undiagnosed) is radically wrong.

## Born Yesterday

THE single item which lived up to the hopes held out for it was Max Gordon's production of Garson Kanin's new comedy, *Born Yesterday*. The opening here in early February was preceded by a host of discouraging and vicious rumors. When Jean Arthur, who had been playing the leading role, left the cast very shortly before the New York opening and while the production was on its preparatory tour, many people decided the production was doomed. When *Born Yesterday* arrived at the Lyceum Theatre, Judy Holliday, who last season won the Clarence Derwent award for the best performance by a supporting player, was doing the part of Billie Dawn. While her present role is in many respects similar to the one for which she won the award in *Kiss Them for Me*; it reveals much greater artistry and depth. It certainly confirms the judges' choice, and fulfills the promise held out for Miss Holliday's future. Such experiences are among the most gratifying that the theatre can offer.

*Born Yesterday* is one of those plays which, at first, seems designed only for entertainment, but which, after some thought, reveals itself as most meaningful and significant. Harry Brock, the play's central character, is a self-made man, who has risen from a small junk-dealer to one of the country's most powerful business men. In his rise, he has walked over all competition, and where ethical means have not produced the desired effect he has shown no scruples in using the unethical. We meet Harry in Washington in September, 1945. Into his suite in an elegant Washington hotel come all of the people Harry is using to put through his latest "deal," and one who refuses to let himself be used. Harry has come to Washington to secure the right to buy up large quantities of scrap metal which the war has left strewn over the world.

Outstanding among the people in Harry's retinue is Billie Dawn, formerly a bit player in

the hit musical *Anything Goes*. Billie is, seemingly, a rather feather-brained girl whose interest in life lies little beyond her material needs of food and clothing. Billie, as well as the business associates of Harry, share in the power and the wealth that Brock has amassed. Billie, in truth, shares in it to a greater extent than most of the others. Beneath Billie's exterior, however, there is a good brain and an awareness of right and wrong. She has felt that there is something evil about the manner in which Harry can push people around, can buy and sell political figures or other public servants. This feeling has been lying dormant until the arrival of Paul Verrall, a writer for the New Republic, who teaches her how to give the feeling eloquence. Under Paul's tutelage, Billie learns to hate Harry Brock and all he stands for and, most importantly, becomes an independent individual.

Even from so brief a summary of the plot, one can see the tremendous significance of Mr. Kanin's play. Harry Brock is not an isolated individual, and there are far too many Billie Dawns and Senator Hedges and Ed Deverys. In *Born Yesterday* we can see how dangerous and evil they can become. The cast has played each word to the fullest. Of Judy Holliday I have spoken; but Paul Douglas as Brock, Gary Merrill as Verrall, Frank Otto as Eddie Brock, Otto Hulett as Ed Devery, Larry Oliver and Mona Bruns as Senator and Mrs. Hedges all deserve praise. Finally, Garson Kanin, as playwright and director, has brought into Donald Oenslager's luxuriously appointed hotel suite a powerful picture of today. In spite of the tragedy of the situation, he has been able to capture a large portion of the comedy that is ever-present—even in the face of life as we live it today.

## Lute Song

ALMOST, but not completely, up to expectation is *Lute Song*, an adaptation by the late Sidney Howard and Will Irwin of the Chinese play, *Pi-Pa-Ki*. Described as "a love story with music," *Lute Song* tells of Tchao-ou-niang and

her unfaithful husband, Tsai-yong. Tsai-yong goes off to the palace of Prince Nieou, the Imperial Preceptor, and (in spite of his wife and family) marries the Princess Nieou-Chi. Tchao-ou-niang remains faithful, cares for her husband's aged parents and carries on in spite of great adversity.

It is, however, upon the music and the beauty of its staging that *Lute Song* must rely for its effect. The former has been composed by Raymond Scott, with the lyrics by Bernard Hanighen. It has a delicate, haunting quality that is charming, but lacks the elements which make for popular appeal. This, it is true, is largely in its favor, but it robs us of the opportunity of hearing it anywhere but at the theatre.

*Lute Song* has been staged by John Houseman, whose work with Orson Welles in the Federal Theatre and Mercury Theatre days is well remembered. He has been able, with no small assistance from all concerned, to achieve all the flavor of this traditional Oriental play, although it is done in entirely different surroundings from those to which it is accustomed. Yeichi Nimura has staged and designed the dance interludes. Robert Edmond Jones, who designed the scenery, costumes and lighting, emerges as almost the real hero of the occasion. Visually, the production is a great delight—perfect to the minutest detail. It is, in fact, these aspects of the production that recommend it most strongly.

Finally, a word must be spoken for the cast and for Michael Myerberg, the producer. Mr. Myerberg has demonstrated before his daring and his will to put on a production in spite of the financial risk involved. As producer of Thornton Wilder's controversial *The Skin of Our Teeth*, he proved himself one of the most important of our producers. Now, again, he has used his talents in bringing to life a script which others recognized but were afraid to try. Very wisely, he has gathered for the production a superlative cast. In the central role, Mary Martin proves herself a greater actress than one had suspected. Her ability to "put over" a song had been amply demonstrated, ere this, but not her talent for expressing emotion and feeling. As Tchao-ou-niang, Miss Martin has the opportunity, of which she makes full use, to prove herself an excellent singing actress. The remainder of the cast is uniformly good. Yul Brynner as the faithless husband, Clarence Derwent as the Manager and the Honorable Tschang, Augustin Duncan and Mildred Dunnock as the parents, McKay Morris as the Imperial Preceptor, Helen Craig as the Princess Nieou-Chi and Rex O'Malley as Youen-Kong are all responsible in large measure for the success of *Lute Song*.

## Antigone and the Tyrant

KATHARINE CORNELL, from whom one has come to expect the best the theatre can offer, has brought to the Cort Theatre her newest production. Miss Cornell, as an actress-manager, has produced in New York and throughout the country, many superlative productions, including: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Shaw's *Saint Joan* and *Candida*, Chekov's *The Three Sisters* and Rudolf Besier's *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. Now, in association with Gilbert Miller, Miss Cornell is turning her attention to Jean Anouilh's treatment of the classic *Antigone* as adapted by Lewis Galantiere.

Last year, while abroad for the U.S.O. with *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, Miss Cornell saw a performance of *An-*

## In the Offing

*Three to Get Ready*, a new musical by those responsible for *One for the Money* and *Two for the Show*, with Ray Bolger.

*Truckline Cafe*, Maxwell Anderson's first new play since *Storm Operation*, with Virginia Gilmore. Harold Clurman and Elia Kazan are responsible for the production. (Closed March 9.)

*The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the Theatre Guild Shakespearean Company's production, directed by Romney Brent, with Charles Coburn as Sir John Falstaff.



*tigone* in Paris. Almost inexplicably, the company had given performances of this play during the Nazi occupation of the French capital. As most probably know, the play recounts the struggle of Antigone against the tyranny of her uncle, Creon, and one imagine that the Nazis would have suppressed it. Judging by the evidence presented in the production, the message must have been most subtly conveyed. This, together with the fact that the script has undergone still another translation—into English, has resulted in a rather off-balance *Antigone*. It may also be the power of Sir Cedric Hardwicke's acting, but one finds oneself siding with the tyrant rather than with the liberty seeking heroine. Antigone's fight for the right to bury her slaughtered brother loses its effect and appears merely the girlish fancy of a romantic mind.

The production opens most interestingly. The entire cast is placed in characteristic postures and moods upon the steps of the all but bare stage. The Chorus (in this instance a lone man) introduces each of them and, as they are introduced, the characters depart. It is a most impressive opening, but from that point the production deteriorates. It is the play itself that is weak. The actors and the director have done all possible, but the total effect leaves too much lacking. Miss Cornell and Sir Cedric Hardwicke carry the main weight of the play, but several others contribute effective portrayals. Bertha Belmore as the Nurse, Ruth Matteson as Ismene, Wesley Addy as Haemon, Horace Braham as the Chorus, George Mathews as a Guard must share in what little credit can be bestowed. Guthrie McClintic did the staging, but it does not rank with some of his better work. The cast is dressed in contemporary evening dress rather than the style of ancient Greece, which also tends to muddle the general effect. *Antigone* must take a minor place both in the current theatrical scene and in the list of Miss Cornell's achievements.

### The Would-Be Gentleman

MICHAEL TODD, who earlier in the season brought us Maurice Evans in *Hamlet*, has turned his attention to one of the classics of another theatre. Turning to the master of the Comedie-Francaise, Mr. Todd has selected *The Would-Be Gentleman* as his choice. Monsieur Moliere entitled his play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*; but even assuming that the gentleman could speak English, he would not recognize the play in its present guise. With Bobby Clark in the title role, the production emerges as something closer latter-day burlesque than 17th century French comedy.

One's enjoyment of the revival would depend very largely upon one's feelings toward Bobby Clark. If one enjoys his antics (as I do); the evening will prove a pleasant one. The plot, in brief, recounts the efforts of Monsieur Jourdain to become a gentleman. He is attended (in turn and together and all at once) by a music master, a dancing master, a fencing master, fine tailors, singers and a philosopher. Mr. Clark romps through them all in a typically Clark manner. Inadvertently, I feel, that often he hits closer to the Moliere conception of the role than many another more inhibited actor. On the whole, however, this Todd-Clark *Would-Be Gentleman* is more Clark in fancy dress than Moliere.

The supporting cast includes June Knight, Edith King, Gene Barry, Ann



Harry Brock and Billie Dawn in a relaxed moment of Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday*. The actors are Paul Douglas and Judy Holliday, the setting by Donald Oenslager.

Thomas, Leonard Elliott, Donald Burr and the dancing team of Ruth Harrison and Alex Fisher. John Kennedy attended to the staging. The costumes were designed by Irene Sharaff; the scenery by Howard Bay.

### The Winter's Tale

THE newly formed Theatre Guild Shakespearean Company has brought to New York, the rarely performed, *The Winter's Tale*. The last important production of the play hereabouts was some thirty-five years ago, with Viola Allen in the leading role. Mary Anderson is, however, the most famous of the more recent actresses to have appeared in this—one of the lesser of the Bard's works. The new production has been jointly directed by B. Iden Payne and Romney Brent, and designed by Stewart Chaney.

If reduced to its plot, *The Winter's Tale* becomes inane. It is the play's imagery and the opportunities it offers for pageantry that make it interesting. These factors have been fully realized in the

present conception, and the result, therefore, is pleasing.

The story, briefly, recounts the travail of Hermione, the Queen of Sicilia, who is suspected of infidelity by her husband, Leontes. After testing his opinion, and finding it strengthened by the Oracle at Delphi, he pronounces sentence against her. Her life is spared her only by the craft and love of Paulina, the wife of one of the lords of the court. The latter half of the play takes part sixteen years later, and recounts the adventures of Perdita, their daughter, who has been raised by an elderly shepherd in Bohemia. In true romantic style, the principals are happily reunited for the final curtain.

It is not in the plot of the play, that one seeks the charm of *The Winter's Tale*. It is in the imagery of the lines and the opportunities for imaginative pastoral settings, as has been stated. While I, for one, was not entirely happy with Stewart Chaney's settings; the costumes are perfect. Each is exactly all that one has always hoped the character would wear.

The cast, too, carries off a most difficult assignment valiantly. Henry Daniell and Jessie Royce Landis play Leontes and Hermione with style and excellent speaking of the lines. Florence Reed brings to Paulina all of her stateliness and greatness of manner. The young lovers, Perdita and Florizel, are played by Geraldine Stroock and Robert Duke. Whitford Kane, who has made the Gravedigger in *Hamlet* his own private role for the past several years, plays the old Shepherd. Romney Brent, the co-director, plays Autolycus and speaks the Prologue. Colin Keith-Johnston, Philip Huston, Charles Francis and Kurt Richards figure in lesser roles. This production augurs well for the future of the Theatre Guild's Shakespearean Company.

### On the Road

*The Late George Apley*, with Leo G. Carroll as the Boston Brahmin in George S. Kaufman and John Marquand's adaptation of the latter's book.

*On the Town*, the gay musical about the twenty-four hour New York stay of three members of the United States Navy, with Nancy Walker, music by Leonard Bernstein, book and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green.

*Anna Lucasta*, a reproduction of the Philip Yordan play now in its second year at the Mansfield Theatre in New York.

Jeb

**H**ERMAN SHUMLIN who, as producer and director, has contributed some of the brightest productions of the modern theatre, has turned his attention to Robert Ardrey's *Jeb*. Mr. Ardrey, it will be remembered, is the young playwright whose *Thunder Rock* and *Casey Jones* and *How to Get Tough About It* have been produced in the past several years. None of these plays has been commercially successful, yet all have been acclaimed for their artistry and content. *Thunder Rock* more recently has been one of the London theatre's most successful ventures, and the English film studios quite recently have sent us an excellent cinema reproduction. When it was announced that Mr. Ardrey had written a play about the return of a Negro serviceman and his fight for liberty at home and that Mr. Shumlin would produce and direct it—one's hopes were high for a tremendously good production. The verdict must be, however, that the hopes have not been fulfilled.

Most of the play is set in Jeb's home town in the deep South. After a record of great bravery in battle in the Pacific, Jeb returns unable to do the heavy labor at which he had formerly earned his livelihood. Having learned in the Army how to operate an adding machine, he has set his heart on getting a post as timekeeper at the mill. Mr. Devoure, his employer, is willing to give it to him, but elements in the community are aroused and lawlessness breaks out. Jeb is forced to leave, return to the North—but at the conclusion is resolved to go home again and combat the prejudice. As anxious as one is to be moved by the play, one cannot but feel that too much of the argument is unresolved. The first and last scenes are set in the Elite Cafe in the Negro section of a northern city and, while I believe I see Mr. Ardrey's purpose in including them, they are misleading and detract from the play's impact.

Once again, no fault can be found with the acting. As Jeb Turner, Ossie Davis gives a most convincing performance. Laura Bowman as his mother and Ruby Dee as his sweetheart are both good. Santos Ortega and Grace McTarnahan as the Devoures, Frank M. Thomas as the local banker, Edwin Cushman as a minister and Grover Burgess as Mr. Gibney represent various elements of local society. Morris McKenney, Carolyn Hill Stewart, Wardell Saunders and P. Jay Sidney figure in the cafe scenes. After receiving a poor critical reception. *Jeb* announced its closing at the end of a week's run.

**I** WANT to insert a note about a most promising venture. Cheryl Crawford, Eva LeGallienne and Margaret Webster have joined together to form and organize the American Repertory Theatre, Inc. It is their belief that "we need a theatre that would be for the drama what a library is for literature or a symphony orchestra for music. We should never dream of limiting our libraries to the current best-sellers, nor our orchestras to the latest song hits. We need a theatre that will not only provide entertainment in the sense of amusement, but that will be a stimulating and inspiring factor in our national life and culture."

## Drama for Children

By LOUISE C. HORTON

Director, Children's Theatre, Royal Oak, Mich.

**T**HE director producing a play for the children's stage should never be afraid of the "new" and "different." Children love surprises, sudden beauty of sight and sound, the thrill of the unexpected.

There is both satisfaction and danger in this theatre-philosophy, however. To define our term is, necessarily, the first step. By adding the "new" and "different" to a play we mean to give it, if possible, that touch of magic that lifts the production from the routine and mediocre level to the level of real theatre. But the "new" touch of magic that we add must be inherent in the play itself, a part of its very life. To be strictly accurate, I suppose, we'd avoid use of the word "add" in favor of "bring out." The right touch of magic brings out and makes visual and audible the inner beauty of the play.

Emma Gelders Sterne's lovely *Jeanne D'Arc* attracts many a director. But the ending presents a problem, a stumbling-block when considered for production in a Children's Theatre. The last three or four lines of dialogue between the priest and Jeanne's companion indicate in a very subtle manner that Jeanne has become a martyr. Children do not appreciate or understand subtleties. One director realized that to leave the lines as they are, while effective and meaningful to the adults, would be quite meaningless to the children that made up the larger percentage of the audience. She realized that the point to go over must become visual. As the last words were pronounced, she had Jeanne appear in tableau up center behind a scrim on a level much higher than the stage. Jeanne stood there in armor with her sword raised to the sky. The lights were so thrown upon her figure as to make it seem that she simply appeared in the air above them. Jeanne's spiritual triumph was perfectly clear to the children and their director reports it was the most successful production of

that particular season. In seeking to clarify the play's ending, the director also gave her production that all-important magic touch.

The procession through the audience that is so frequently used in productions of *Aladdin* can be magical if a few simple rules are observed.

1. The actors in the procession must make no direct contact with the audience as they pass through it. The Princess may smile graciously, but that is as far as the contact dare go.
2. Their make-up and costumes should be natural and careful in detail, not theatrical, thus producing a jarring note and attracting the wrong kind of attention.
3. No acting on stage must distract from the procession and yet these actors on stage must not fall out of character.
4. When the procession reaches the stage, the play's actors must proceed evenly so that there is no decided break between the two.
5. If the audience is included—but not too directly—in the action of the entire play, the procession will not seem the forced "innovation" that it usually does.

Playing the schoolroom scene of *Tom Sawyer* with the pupils' backs to the audience and the teacher on a slightly raised level facing the audience, does wonders for the scene's clarity by presenting a believable picture to the children and pointing up all the important movements.

Every worthwhile play presents several such opportunities or pitfalls, depending on one's point-of-view.

Keep looking for the hidden magic eye in the play you are producing and your theatre will grow in stature and beauty.

**A** YOUNG director recently spoke of Children's Theatre as an "adventurous field." The variety of information reaching us for this month's column more than proves the remark a fact.

First comes news of the Traveling Children's Theatre of Richmond, Virginia, which calls itself "The Aladdin Players." The City Division of Recreation in Richmond deserves credit for giving the idea impetus, and the department store of Miller and Rhoads for providing that all important item of financial backing.

During the winter months, this group is housed in the Lyric Theatre. In summer, their portable stage tours the city parks. So far the Theatre has presented: *Aladdin*, *Mary Poppins*, *Robin Hood*, *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, and *Jack and the Beanstalk*. About 10,000 children have already seen the plays.

Another traveling Children's Theatre is the annual production by Wayne University drama students in Detroit, Michigan, for the children of various schools throughout the city. This year their choice is *Aladdin*.

### Production Calendar

Children's Theatre of Seattle, Washington  
*Tom Sawyer's Treasure Hunt*  
*The Christmas Nightingale*

Children's Studio of Speech and Dramatic Art, Washington, D. C.

May 10, 11—*The Blue Bird*

May 13, 14—Pre-school presentation of nursery rhymes and Mother Goose Stories.

May 16, 17—*Anne of Green Gables*

Children's Stage of the Catholic Theatre, Detroit, Michigan

Feb. 14, 15, 16—*Tatters and Rags*.





Scene from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* staged for the Children's Theatres of Newport News and Williamsburg, Virginia, by dramatics students of the Newport News High School (Troupe 122), with Dorothy M. Crane directing.

IN A remodeled stable in the rear of 1644 Connecticut Avenue in Washington, D. C., is a miniature stage constructed in what once were stalls. Here we find, "The Children's Studio of Speech and Dramatic Art," a unique ambitious Children's Theatre directed by Rose Robison Cowen.

During the month of May this group will present three full-length productions, one for pre-school children, one with teen-aged drama students, and one with general age appeal. The latter is to be an elaborate production of Maurice Maeterlinck's allegorical fairy tale, *The Blue Bird*.

Word from the Studio tells of youngsters who have walked into roles in professional productions such as *Junior Miss*, *Good Morning, Corporal*, and *School for Brides*.

A VERY definite role in the Children's Theatre world is being played by the Marionette. We find him dotted here and there over the globe, playing for audiences of enthusiastic children.

As stated in *The Grapevine Telegraph*, published by The Puppeteers of America, "Puppetry is a great little world." And it gets around, too, we might add!

Tying up puppetry with children's theatre in general is grand news from Mexico. In a report from Miss Conception Sada, chief of the department of the Theatre in Mexico, is mention of a projected

Children's Arts building near the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City. This building is to house a Children's Theatre and a complete auditorium for puppets. Miss Sada also mentions the tremendous power of the puppet shows and "theatre" in the literacy campaign in that country.

Roberto Lago, who also worked on the literacy campaign, has just completed his own dramatization of *Hansel and Gretel* and *The Little Match Girl*. The latter makes use of Haydn's *Toy Symphony*.

In Australia, we find a children's puppet theatre in a place with a story-book name—Flinders Lane, Melbourne. The children see shows and are also given a chance to learn the arts of puppet making and of manipulation. Music appreciation classes are conducted by Miss Patricia Price, using music from the puppet shows.

AN INTELLIGENT suggestion for the solving of the intermission "problem" is made by Julie Thompson, director of the Springfield Junior Civic Theatre.

"Our first play of the year was *The Wizard of Oz*. I took a character from the original story—not in the dramatization—the Queen Mouse—and wrote narration telling of the happenings in the original story between the events depicted on stage. So at the close of each curtain, instead of the house lights coming up, the spot came up on the Mouse in front of the curtain, and she told them more of the story than the play could do. . . . The next production is to be *The Silver Thread*. For this I have

chosen a thirteen-year-old girl who will be dressed as a Neighbor of the leading character. She will come before the curtain as the Mouse did. . . . I like this method very much for it keeps the audience in the story and it gives an opportunity for fuller enjoyment of the play by setting the coming scene and tying the threads of the story together."

This idea should work most successfully, because it would not break the important atmosphere continuity of the production. It should be worth trying at any rate.

#### Columbus, Ga.

THE Community Children's Theatre of Columbus, Georgia, has discovered the Saturday morning class idea as their new development this season. Miss Edwina Wood, Superintendent of Recreation there, writes:

"The one new feature that we have inaugurated is that we have a Saturday morning workshop for the children. We have one of our recreation leaders, who is a graduate in dramatics, to carry this part of the work on for us. We hold these meetings in one of our community centers, which is equipped with a small stage. . . . Mrs. Fulton, who is the leader, has the group for one and a half hours. . . . Any child who is a member of the Community Theatre is entitled to participate in this group. We find that children who are not ready to take part in a play enjoy being in such a group and we also discover latent talent through this work. The children evidently enjoy coming on Saturday morning to such a class because the same group seems to come pretty much every week. This winter Mrs. Fulton will be assisted by another one of our playground leaders who recently graduated in community drama from the University of Georgia. We feel that we will have two very capable people and should really make headway in children's dramatics."

# Staging the Play of the Month

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers, and students choose, cast, and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed.

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky

## Angel Street

(As produced and directed by Earl W. Blank at Berea College)

Article by THARON MUSSER

Technical and Art Director for ANGEL STREET

*Angel Street*, a Victorian thriller in three acts, by Patrick Hamilton. 3 women; 2 men; 2 policemen (no lines). 1885 costumes. One interior. Royalty, quoted on application. Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

### Suitability

*Angel Street* is, by construction, an attention-demanding play. It gives the audience an evening of suspense that demands either tears or laughter. The performance is lightened only by the flippant, cockney maid and her advances toward the master of the house, and the jovial detective.

As there are no minor roles with lines in *Angel Street*, it requires maturity and ambition of all the cast. The play is a long, strenuous one and not always suited for high school production. Our Berea Players combine high school and college students; hence we had one high school junior, a Thespian, in the cast. The rest of our cast were college students, none over the age of eighteen. Our Manningham was seventeen. The leading role requires the actress to be on the stage for practically the entire evening. The ability to do this in character is not ordinarily within the power of a novice actress.

### Plot

The play is the demoniac story of the Mannings of *Angel Street* in London, England. Under the guise of kindness, handsome Mr. Manningham is torturing his wife into insanity. He accuses her of petty aberrations he has arranged himself; and since her mother died of insanity, she is more than half convinced that

she, too, is going out of her mind. While her diabolical husband is out of the house, a benign police inspector visits her and ultimately proves to her that her husband is a maniacal criminal suspected of a murder committed fifteen years ago in the same house, and that he is preparing to dispose of her. Then starts the game of trying to uncover the necessary evidence against Mr. Manningham.

*Angel Street* brings such remarks from the audience as, "Oh, everything's going to happen in the first act." It was the intention of Mr. Hamilton to present the plot in the first act and spend the other two acts in dramatically letting the inevitable take place.

### Casting

The casting of this show is a matter of careful scrutiny for a cast which is not only quick studies, but excellent character analysts. The part of Bella Manningham requires a mature actress who is able to sustain the part of a half-crazed woman for the entire evening. The two men are also characters who should be chosen with carefulness. Manningham, the suave, authoritative, at times bitter and with a touch of mystery, demands all the smoothness of an experienced actor. Rough, the detective, is the active, jovial, pudgy old man who completely dominates the scenes. The parts of the other two women are smaller, but certainly cannot be cast without careful consideration. Nancy, the maid, is the only cockney in the show. She must have a good comedy sense, since she affords most of the comedy relief, which is very essential for this play. The subservient housekeeper, Elizabeth, gives the play stability, welcomed contrast to the roles of the other four characters. The two policemen (English bobbies) have no lines, and are cast for their size.



Stage setting for all three acts of *Angel Street* as given at Berea College, with Dr. Blank directing.

## Tharon Musser

Miss Musser, a senior student at Berea College, hails from Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, and Marion, Virginia. She is a member of the Tau Delta Tau National Professional Stagecraft Fraternity and has been the local chapter's president. She is also a member of the Alpha Psi Omega National Professional Dramatic Fraternity and president of the Berea Players. Miss Musser is an English major.

### Direction

The first problem in directing *Angel Street* is the learning of lines. The majority of lines are given the two men and Bella. Long speeches and similarity of them make the parts extremely hard to master. Once this is accomplished, tempo presents a problem, especially in the long scenes between Bella and Rough. It took many special scene rehearsals in our production to achieve smoothness in these dual scenes.

We spent a great deal of time in directing entrances and exits. By using portieres at one entrance, we were able to get smoothness in the exits of Manningham, which added to his suave character. In the very strategic exit of Rough, when he is hiding in Manningham's room, we brought a gasp of suspense from the audience by having him forget his derby and running back into the room to get it. Incidentally, this hat should be gray so that it will not fade into the black desk. The use of the stairway required much practice to attain smoothness in the running up and down it. One scene especially, where Nancy and Manningham pass on the stairs, we had trouble in keeping them from brushing against the set.

Bella's character was extremely difficult to attain. The tendency is to over-play. Our Bella, in acquiring this half-crazed woman, first screamed through the whole show; thus losing her climaxes, then she toned down to her final character. It was necessary for Bella's body to seem boneless. In her scenes with Manningham, eurhythmics was very important. Three different times she is thrown into a chair, and once she is choked; another time she falls to the ground claspings Manningham's legs. In all of these scenes it was necessary for her body to be completely relaxed. A very difficult scene to attain correct timing on was the one in first Act when Bella madly searches the secretary for the misplaced grocery bill. She gives the illusion of being completely mad as she slams doors and frantically goes through papers, at the same time giving the impression of raving at the top of her voice.

The tea scene was difficult from the first. The timing must be absolutely exact. Our property mistress plotted the tray so that each item on it would always be in exactly the same spot. Rough's continual eating of sugar cubes gave him a timing problem. It is necessary to have food and water for tea for many rehearsals before production. We also found that fresh



bread, cut in small cubes, was much easier for Rough to eat than actual sugar.

The scene which seemed to bring the audience out of their seats was Manningham's sudden rage when he accuses Bella of breaking into his desk. His business of bringing his fist down on the desk and at the same time motivating it with his voice, demanded practice to perfection for timing.

The love scenes are Nancy's delight in the show, and she has to give the audience the feeling of her complete possession of Manningham during these scenes. Do not mask these love scenes. They demand much rehearsal and must present Nancy's character as a loose woman. She does all that is expected of a woman of this type, using all the techniques she has learned in her wide experience with men.

All the scenes where lights were turned up or down require perfection on the part of the cast in order that the electricians can coordinate the lights accordingly.

In directing *Angel Street* the mood must be sustained at all times, and yet keep the audience's suspense from becoming boring.

### Stage Problems

The chief problem arising in the staging of *Angel Street* is the lighting of the play. The lights are of the utmost importance and must be regulated perfectly, else the entire mood and purpose of the play is lost.

Although the script calls for a lamp on center table, we omitted this because it facilitated the business around the table, made for confusion during the tea scene, and was one small item off the electrician's list of things to do.

The bracket lamps on either side of the mantel are of the greatest importance. We were fortunate enough to find some old gas lamp fixtures which were easily wired. A 10-watt bulb was sufficient light to create the illusion of dimming and brightening. Two spots on the border were focused on the gas lights to heighten the illusion of changing the light intensity. The lamp on the desk left stage and the back hall lamp were operated in the same way, except that a 15-watt bulb was used. The intensity of the light was cut down by placing frost and light amber gelatin on the inside of the shade. Incidentally, the shades for the desk and the hall table lamps presented quite a problem for the time until it was discovered that an inverted Crisco jar with paint decorations was the perfect size for them. The general lighting was accomplished entirely from foots and border spots. Except for two 250-watt spots, in which we used flesh-pink gelatin, we used an amber gelatin, which blended perfectly with the red-brown color of the flats. Our dimmers were never brought up full; thus the entire play was done in a kind of haze just bright enough for visibility.

Having limited electrical equipment, it was impossible to manage everything from the switchboard. The right stage hall light and the fireplace both operated from an outlet which had to be switched on and off. An amber glass shade was placed over the 25-watt bulb in the hall to carry out the general lighting scheme used on stage.

Each gas light operated on a separate dimmer, which could be turned on to the master dimmer. When any gas light went up or down the general lighting, both foots and spots, accordingly went up and down. At first we were disturbed over the manner in which the actors and electricians could coordinate the light cues. It was impossible to see the stage from the electrician's booth and we considered using telephone batteries for the actors to signal to the

### Costumes

THE two Bobbies presented our main problem in costuming. After studying all available pictures, particularly those in *The National Geographic Magazine*, we began to create. We took two "Abraham Lincoln" coats and turned the collars up so that they fitted closely around the neck, then sewed two rows of brass buttons down the front. Wide bands of red and white striped material were sewed around the left sleeves. The caps were made from defense plant helmets, by pointing the tops with brown gummed paper and painting them with black enamel.

	ACT I	ACT II	ACT III
Bella	Rust-brown dress (satin) trimmed with pink lace, black low-heeled slippers and black stockings.	Same	Same.
Elizabeth	Grey striped two pieced dress. (Padded.)	Same	Same.
Nancy	Black dress, white apron, black and white cap.	No appearance.	Green dress, brown bustle and collar, brown and green bonnet.
Manningham	Beige pin striped pants, white vest with tiny, wine dots, wine smoking jacket changed to a tan under coat, black top cape and hat, navy blue polka dot tie, spats and black shoes.	Same polka dot tie, changed to flowered one during act.	Same.
Rough	Grey-green pants, mulberry shirt, purple tie, black striped vest, grey under coat, black over cape and derby hat. (Padded.)	Same	Same.
Policemen	No appearance.	No appearance.	Black trousers, black torso length coats, black Bobby caps.

electricians. However, in working with the lights it was discovered that by going to the fly loft, a signaler could see all the action on the stage and be seen by the electricians. This system of signaling eliminated the complicated apparatus that would otherwise have been necessary. With all possible economizing we still had sixty-four light cues, involving approximately two hundred switchboard manipulations, requiring three people at the board.

The problem of the wallpaper pattern was one that took considerable thought. We did not wish to use a stencil because of the appearance of definite lines it would give. A look of faded worn wallpaper was the effect we hoped to achieve and this was finally done by sponging in a more or less definite diamond pattern with dull blue paint on a red-brown base. We wished the top of the set to be almost blended out and this was accomplished both by keeping the lights off the top of the flats and by sponging more heavily nearer the top and also in the corners.

The staircase was less of a problem than anticipated. Instead of constructing a new curving unit of stairs, we used two units of straight steps and achieved the curve desired by curving the landing and the banister.

The sliding doors called for in the script were substituted by deep wine portieres, which also aided in creating the soft blended effect

we wanted. Two brown pylons were placed on either side of the portiere unit and this gave a finished Victorian look. We carried out this Victorian scheme by using a molding of brown corrugated paper at the top of the set, and the same running nine feet up the flats at every projecting corner. Brown baseboard finished off the bottom of the set. All clutter, characteristic of a house of this period, was added to by bric-a-brac and pictures.

On right stage we used a large window running from the ceiling to the floor. This was set back in the wall sixteen inches. Deep wine drapes matching the portieres were used with lace curtains behind them. A lemon yellow light, changed to amber for third act, shone through the window, giving the illusion of a street light. We balanced this window on left stage by the fireplace with a large mirror over it. The mirror was aluminum painted cardboard placed in a large Victorian picture frame.

All our flats used for hall masking were done in a grey-green color, sponged with the same brown-red used in the set proper.

The bouquet in the hall right stage was amazingly effective in casting shadows on the wall, because it was a feather duster placed in a vase with strips of corrugated paper fastened to it.

The furniture for *Angel Street* is one of the lesser problems. Heavy Victorian chairs,

### Make-up

THE women's make-up in this show presents little difficulty. Nancy must have a gay, saucy look in contrast with a drawn pallor of Bella. Elizabeth's hair was our main problem with her. We parted it in the middle and greased it tightly to her head, putting it up in the back. This gave her the stern, efficient look that was desired. Mr. Manningham's make-up should accentuate the cruelty of the man. We achieved this by means of a small pointed goatee, sideburns, and a thin downward pointing mustache. The detective, Rough, was the most difficult make-up. We worked for pudgy, red cheeks, and got this by highlighting the cheek line to give an appearance of fat and by small red spots of rouge on the outside edge of the cheek bone near the eye. A grey mustache, thick and growing up to within an inch of his eye aided in giving the appearance of joviality. Both policemen wore black mustaches, bordering on the handle-bar type.

Plot: (Miner's numbers)

	Grease Paint	Rouge	Liner	Powder	Crepe Hair
Bella:	4-11	Med.	Dk. Brown	4	None
Nancy:	5	Med.	Green	5	None
Elizabeth:	11	None	Lake	11	None
Rough:	6-11	Dark	Lake	11	Dark Grey
Manningham:	5-12	Dark	Lake	12	Med. Brown
Two Policemen:	4-6	Dark	Lake	6	Black

couch, and desk are the essentials. We used a round-topped table for center stage and draped a heavy, dull spread over it.

Mood is the important thing for this play, and we considered this in everything we did to make a set that would not distract, in any way, the audience's mind from the mystery of the show.

#### Budget

Miscellaneous (including royalty)	\$ 65.36
Publicity	24.17
Make-up	6.00
Stagecraft	7.26
Lighting	6.80
Costumes	.40

Total .....\$109.99

In our Berea Players' production we are forced to economize as much as possible. Our royalty and publicity expenses are our chief ones, since we manage to use old equipment as much as possible. Our set costs this time were surprisingly low, the only expenses being for paint and dye for drapes. We save a great deal on lumber through use of corrugated paper in all the places that we can possibly get by with it.

#### Publicity

Publicity is one of the largest items on our budget, despite the fact that we economize as much as possible. In a way we were fortunate that we did the show at a time when the stage play had just closed on Broadway and the movie, *Gas Light*, was popular. With some people this publicity from other sources aroused curiosity, but with others there was a fear that they would be bored because they had seen the movie. In our advertising in the local newspaper, we made much of the differences between the play and the movie.

Posters were placed in thirty different business establishments and a large "coming" sign was on the front of our theatre two weeks before production. A trailer was used in the Assembly. We played to full houses for both productions.

#### Educational Values

*Angel Street* is excellent for its acting exercises. It is also one of the best shows we have ever done to secure cooperation between cast and crew.

May Issue: *The Admirable Crichton*

## The Technician's Roundtable

Conducted by A. S. GILLETTE  
Technical Director, University Theatre, State  
University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

**Question:** We have tried to buy two roller porch curtains made from thin slats of wood that are such a characteristic part of every screened porch, but we've been unable to find any. Can you tell us how to build them or how to make a substitute?

**Answer:** If your shop is equipped with circular table saw and if you can find sufficient clear white pine or bass wood, you will find the making of these curtains not so difficult as they are time consuming. Set your saw to cut as narrow a strip as possible from the thickness of regular 1" stock lumber. This should give you a strip of wood that is  $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide by about  $\frac{3}{32}$  or  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick. In determining the number of slats required to cover a given opening be sure to allow for the  $\frac{1}{8}$ " space between each slat. After all the slats have been cut lay them side by side and paint with a green shingle stain or with regulation scene paint. All faces and edges of each slat must be painted. The tedious part of this job is tying the slats together. At intervals of about a foot along the length of the shade are the cords by which all the slats are joined and which serve to support the weight of the shade when it is opened. A double cord is used which crosses each slat both on the front and back and is knotted between slats. The cords are interlaced between slats much in the same

fashion as weaving. The top and bottom of the shade are reinforced by light 1" x 2" battens.

Unless you have an abundance of time to spend on the construction of a slat shade, it might be advisable to consider a substitute shade which is much easier to construct and that may be faked, if the business does not demand that the shade operate. This substitute is a roller type curtain which differs from the other in that it is covered with an imitation striped awning in place of slats of wood. The basis of this type shade is the roller upon which the awning is wound. Cut a series of 7" circular sweeps that may be spaced at 18" intervals along the length of the curtain. The sweeps are fastened together by four light battens that measure  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 1" that are fitted into notches cut into the circumference of each sweep. Cover this framework with 1" mesh chicken wire or with hardware cloth. Muslin may be painted and used for the awning. Cut a length of material equal to the distance the curtain must be raised or lowered and add to this sufficient additional material to provide one or two servings around the roller. The muslin should be painted on both sides before attaching it to either the roller or to the batten at the top by which the shade is supported.

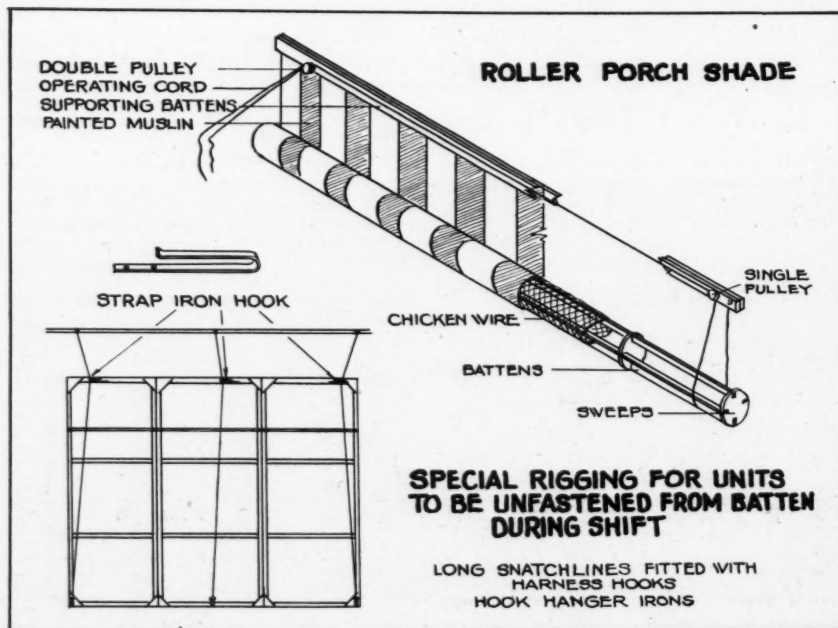
The accompanying sketch illustrates the method of construction and the manner of rigging. If the shade does not have to be operated, a very short length of awning will suffice and the rigging may be faked as well.

**Question:** Can you recommend a mixture for canvas glue that will not come through the "dutchmen" and leave a dark stain on the finished paint job?

**Answer:** We've tried any number of canvas glue mixtures with varying degrees of success but have finally settled on two mixtures that seem to meet all the demands asked of them.

The first of these is a mixture of 50% glue to 50% whiting paste. Place the ground amber glue in a bucket and cover with water. Put this bucket in a double boiler and heat until the glue reaches a liquid state. Make a heavy paste of whiting and water in a separate vessel. This paste mixture should be thick enough so that it will retain a shape or an indentation for a few moments before leveling off. Mix this paste and the hot glue together; the glue will thin out the paste to the proper consistency for canvassing. This canvassing paste must be worked while it is hot and should be kept in a double boiler over a slow flame.

A second formula for canvassing paste has the advantage of being a little cheaper and it need not be heated to keep it in a workable condition. This is a mixture of  $\frac{1}{3}$  hot glue (prepared in the same manner as that mixed with whiting) to  $\frac{2}{3}$  cold water paste. Mix the cold water paste by sifting it into a bucket containing water, stirring constantly as the paste is added until it is smooth and free of lumps.

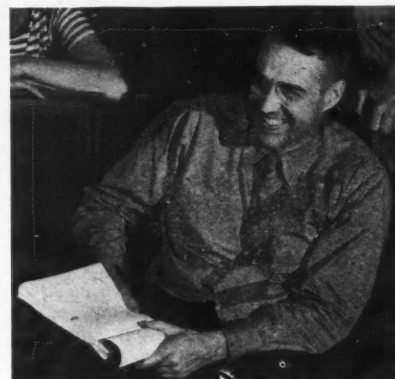




# A NEW HIT!

by

## WILLIAM DAVIDSON



# "Strictly Formal"

3-act comedy — 1 int. set — 6 m., 10 w.



Cindy makes her entrance.  
She's anything but strictly  
formal!

WITH the Senior Dance only eleven days away, Jane and Sally have no dates—George and Jim haven't said a word. But their worries are only beginning, for Sally's house guest, Marcia, snares one man right after the other, with the old "go get 'em" tactics. That is, everyone except Elroy, who is constantly practicing the shot-put, but who isn't as dumb as he seems. Then the home-front girls get reinforcements, for Cindy arrives—horn, bow, bag, and self. Cindy is a movie fan, and ready to solve any problem on the basis of how Ginger Rogers landed Fred Astaire. By the time George and Marcia get back from the show, Cindy has Jane stretched out artistically on the sofa, rigged out in her mother's loveliest negligee, powdered dead white, and apparently close to death! George is scared—until Marcia suggests that Jane has mumps! George beats it; but Cindy is not through fixing things. Her next venture collides with the alleged case of mumps. Then Elroy puts the shot into the prize peony bed, and what started as a mild worry about who dates whom to the Senior Dance, becomes a war of Dads and Peonies, Shot-Puts, Mumps, Movies, and that kind of heart-warming, laughter-crammed evening that William Davidson gives us all with such complete satisfaction to cast and audience.

The instant response to the release of this new play, last month, has been so great that the publishers have already placed a large reprint order. Be the first in your area to give the new Davidson hit!

By the same author:

"BROTHER GOOSE"

•

"ACT YOUR AGE"

•

"THE LITTLE HONEY"

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## THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING CO.

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# On the High School Stage

News items published in this department are contributed by schools affiliated with

## The National Thespian Society

### Vandalia, Ill.

MAJOR dramatic events at the Vandalia Community High School (Thespian Troupe 245) got underway early in the fall with a successful production of the melodrama, *Kind Lady*, in which Thespians played leading roles. This play was the first of its kind to be given at this school in several years. Miss Harriet M. McHard directed. On January 14 seven students were admitted to Thespian membership. In February the student-directed one-act play, *Eternal Life*, was given before a school assembly. Major interest at this time centers on the preparation of the play, *Two Crooks and a Lady*, which will be entered in the district festival sponsored by the Illinois High School Association.

### Kenova, W. Va.

THE first full-length play of this season, *The Nutt Family*, was presented in November at the Ceredo-Kenova High School, with Mrs. Nan Hutchison directing. Mrs. Hutchison sponsors Troupe 115 at this school. The second three-act play, *Mama's Baby Boy*, was also given in November. The third and last major production of the season, *Brother Goose*, will be staged in April. Among the one-acts given this year are *Will o' the Wisp*, *The First Thanksgiving*, *Peace on Earth*, *Antic Spring*, and *Georgie Porgie*. *Antic Spring* was entered in the District Play Festival held at the Charleston High School on March 23. Make-up, characterizations, costumes, and properties are among the topics discussed at the club meetings held during the season.—Mrs. John Norman, Secretary.

### Bradley, Ill.

SEVEN new members were added to Thespian Troupe 223 of the Bradley-Bourbonnais High School at a special ceremony held in February. Nine members of the Troupe appeared in the production of *A Ready-Made Family*, presented by the Senior Class on December 15. Thespians also appeared in a Christmas skit offered by the Junior Class. Dramatics club meetings this season are being devoted to a study of drama. Miss Agnes Stelter has charge of dramatics and sponsors the Troupe. Thespian officers are Jeanne Reilly, president; Herman Falkenhan, vice-president; Velma Dean Hasemeyer, secretary, and Mary Ann Christensen, treasurer.—Velma Dean Hasemeyer, Secretary.

### San José, Calif.

A POPULAR production of *Snafu* on November 29-30 marked the opening of major events at the San José Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 537), with Miss Mary Alice Hamm as director of dramatics and Thespian sponsor. The play was sponsored by the student body. On January 18 the Senior Class presented *Lost Horizon* which was also well received. Members of the Drama II class presented the one-acts, *Romance Is a Racket* and *Fiat Lux*, during the fall term. Dramatics students have also attended during the season professional and semi-professional performances in San José and San Francisco, including *Kiss and Tell*, *Harvey*, *Oklahoma*, and *Foolish Notion*. The season's activities have also included

exchange programs with the high schools at Gatos, Mountain View, and Campbell. Miss Hamm reports that interest in dramatics is high among her students.—Laura Keffer, Secretary.

### San Bernardino, Calif.

A NEW interest in dramatics exists this season at the San Bernardino High School (Thespian Troupe 148) under the leadership of Miss Vera L. Brown, new director and Troupe sponsor. During the fall term members of the Troupe produced the following one-act plays: *Curse You*, *Jack Dalton*, *Why the Chimes Rang*, *The Blue Teapot*, *Sauce for the Gossips*, and *Who Gets the Car Tonight*. The major play of the year, *Out of the Frying Pan*, is tentatively scheduled for production on March 29. Trends in modern theatre has been the subject for several dramatics meetings held during the season. Students also appeared in four radio dramas presented over the local station. Added interest in dramatics was created by attendance at several plays given at the Pasadena Playhouse, including *Chicken Every Sunday*, *Snafu*, *Kiss and Tell*, and *Blithe Spirit*. Eleven students were admitted to Thespian membership at a public ceremony held in January under Miss Brown's direction.

### Bluefield, W. Va.

AN evening of three one-act plays—*Rope*, *Haunted Theatre*, and *Murder by Morning*—was given by members of Troupe 55 on November 15 as the first major dramatic event of the new season at the Beaver High School. Miss Barbara Anne Lilly is director of dramatics at this school. The second major play of the season, *Junior Miss*, was given late in the fall semester. A performance of the one-act play, *More Perfect Union*, was given at a school assembly early in February, and will be repeated at Concord State College on March 27. The season will also include a musical comedy. Dramatics club meetings are given to a study of make-up and play directing. A series of radio programs over the local station marked the opening of second semester projects.—Tommy Sutherland, Secretary.

### Rigby, Idaho

A PRODUCTION of the three-act play, *Do, Re, Mi*, at the Rigby High School (Thespian Troupe 67) was greeted with considerable success according to word received from Mrs. Amy F. Hawker, dramatics director and Troupe sponsor. Local interest in the play was created by the addition of an Idaho informal get-together to greet Bill, one of the characters in the play. The second major play, *Nine Girls*, was given in February with Mrs. Hawker directing. Dramatics students also assisted in the production of the musical comedy, *In the Garden of the Shah*, staged by the Music Department. In addition to her regular school drama program, Mrs. Hawker is active as director of community plays. In this capacity she presented *A Stranger Passes* the last week in January and a production of *The Green Vine* in March. Mrs. Hawker reports that students are highly interested in dramatic work, making this year one of the most successful in the history of the school.

### Jamestown, N. Y.

THREE major plays have been presented so far this season at the Jamestown High School (Thespian Troupe 364), with Miss Myrtle Paetznick in the role of director and Troupe sponsor. *Ghost Wanted* was given by the Pretenders Club on November 9. Thespians offered *Wings of the Morning* in January. Members of the Pretenders Club staged *And Came the Spring* on January 25, bringing an extremely busy and successful fall semester to a close. The term also included production of one-act plays and the study of stage business, projecting, registering emotions, and stage movements.—Priscella Anderson, Secretary.

### Medina, Ohio

MEMBERS of the dramatics club of the Medina High School (Troupe 441) opened the current season with a popular production of the play, *Night of January 16*, on November 16, under the direction of Miss Dorothy E. Myers. Particularly impressive during the fall term was the series of one-acts given at the school assembly programs by various groups. Some of the plays were later repeated before organizations in the city. Among the titles offered were *Let's Make Up*, *A Christmas Prayer*, *A Modern Thanksgiving*, *A Happy Journey*, and *High School Daze*. Late in the fall term a number of students attended a performance of *Antigone and the Tyrant*, with Katharine Cornell and Sir Cedric Hardwicke in the leading roles. Highlight of the term was the formal installation of Troupe 441 under Miss Myers' direction with the following students comprising the charter roll: Robert Harnden, Jane Lovejoy, Junior McComas, Richard Phillips, Allan Reinhardt, Doreen Cogswell, Thomas J. Doyle, Patricia Gibbs, and Douglas Hanshue.

### Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

CONSIDERABLE popular success greeted a production of *Best Foot Forward*, sponsored by members of Thespian Troupe 525 of the Wisconsin Rapids High School on November 15. The play was directed by Rose Walters, Troupe sponsor. A second major play, not chosen at the time of this writing, will be presented by the Senior Class this spring. Considerable interest also greeted the dramatics club play contest held on January 17, 18, with the following plays as entries: *Georgie Porgie*, *Life with Willie*, *Suitable for Charity*, *Everything's Reasonable*, and *Everybody's Doing It*.—Phyllis Koss, Secretary.

### Pendleton, Ore.

DRAMATICS activities for the fall term at the Pendleton High School (Thespian Troupe 466) included the performance of two one-act plays, *Paging William Shakespeare*, *Life With Willy*, and the Senior Class play, *Great Caesar's Ghost*, presented on November 30. Mrs. Laura Parker directed. Thespians and members of other dramatic groups in school are also presenting several assembly programs this season. The spring term will include the production of the Junior Class play, not chosen at the time of this writing. Thespians presented earlier in the year a series of seven radio programs as their contribution to the Tuberculosis Drive.—Jackie Hales, Secretary.

### Bluffton, Ohio

THE Christmas season at the Bluffton High School (Troupe 169) was observed with several performances of the play, *A Sign Unto You*, given before school and community groups. Full-length plays for this year are *Best Foot Forward* and *Papa Is All*, the latter affording many excellent opportunities for dialect and stage work among students. Mr. Paul Stauffer, director and Troupe sponsor, and his cast, all of whom are Pennsylvanians, found *Papa Is All*, an extremely interesting play to produce. The current dramatics season continues the excellent record established by this school over a period of years.



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**A**MONG the one-act plays presented this season at the Trap Hill High School (Thespian Troupe 445) were *Elmer Cleans Up* and *The Bird's Christmas Carol*, both performances winning favorable comment for the skill in acting shown by the players. Under the direction of Sponsor Mrs. H. G. Farmer, Thespians have been busy in various activities, involving almost everything from the sale of advertisements to the production of one-act plays. The sale of advertisements netted some \$750.00 which is being used to purchase a badly needed stage curtain and to repaint the old interior sets. Eighteen students have been admitted to Thespian membership this season.

Massillon, Ohio

**T**HESPIANS opened the current drama season at the Washington High School (Troupe 178) with two outstanding performances of *Junior Miss* on October 31 and November 1, with sponsor Herbert E. Rogers directing. Large audiences were present for both evenings. A second major play, not yet chosen, will be staged sometime in May. Thespians also offered, on January 30, two one-act plays, *Rehearsal* and *If Men Played Cards as Women Do*. A special presentation of *A Christmas Carol* on December 21, staged and directed by Mr. Rogers, attracted much favorable comment. *Antic Spring* was given in the play festival sponsored by Kent State University on March 16. Mr. Rogers offers five courses in dramatic arts at this school.—Richard V. Oberlin, Secretary.

Dubuque, Iowa

**M**EMBERS of Thespian Troupe 69 of the Dubuque Senior High School celebrated National Drama Week, February 3-9, with the performance of two one-act plays, *Meet the Countess* and *Don't Tell a Soul*, given in the Little Theater. With the help of the art departments and the promotion committee, a strip advertising various phases of the dramatics program through silhouettes and figures was posted above the office door. Also to encourage student interest in dramatics, the Troupe had charge of the glass bulletin board in the library, arranged by Thespian Elaine Yiannias. Ushering in the activities of National Drama Week was the initiation of five students as Thespians. Those who took the pledge were Janie Slichter, Jean Jones, Marian Endsley, Elaine Yiannias, and Burton Wiener. Miss Edna Walter and T. Eldon Jackson were admitted as honorary members of the Troupe. Miss Sibyl V. Lamb is serving as sponsor this season.—Jim Connor, President.

Springville, Utah

**O**N November 16, 17, the rollicking comedy *Come Rain or Shine*, was given with considerable popular success by dramatics students of the Springville High School (Troupe 92), with Miss Beth Evans directing. Writes Miss Evans, "I was pleased by the large attendance which we had both nights, indicating that the public is beginning to recognize the ability of our high school students. This interest helps us to build our dramatics department into a Little Theatre group, presenting more and better plays as progress is made."

Miss Evans also reports that plans for a new stage and auditorium have been drawn. Plans for the spring term got underway with a Gay Nineties Revue during National Drama Week. In March the opera, *Sonia*, was presented. In April a play will be entered in the festival at Brigham Young University.

Mt. Vernon, Wash.

**T**HE popular three-act comedy, *Brother Goose*, was presented on November 16 by the Senior Class at the Mount Vernon Union High School, marking the opening of the current drama season at this school. The second major play, *Fly Away Home*, was given by the Associated Student Body on March 1. Preparations are now being made for the staging of scenes from *Naughty Marietta* on April 9, with the high school music groups as sponsor. Dramatics club meetings are given to a study of stage terminology, stage scenery, and make-up. A number of dramatics students attended, in Seattle, the performance of *The Three Sisters* and *The Student Prince*. Mr. George Hodson is director of dramatics and Troupe sponsor.—Laurice Commet, Secretary.

Idaho Falls, Idaho

**T**HESPIAN Troupe 480 continues its lively program of dramatics activities at the Idaho Falls High School, with Mr. J. H. Plummer as sponsor and director of dramatics. Recent projects included the production of an original skit, *Drama in Everyday Life*, staged at the annual Thespian assembly early in February, and the production of *Nine Girls* given to a large audience on February 6.



### Independence, Mo.

THREE major plays are included this season in the dramatics program offered at the Williams Chrisman High School (Thespian Troupe 389), with Miss Margaret Meredith as director and Troupe sponsor. The season opened with performances of *Death Takes a Holiday* on November 1, 2, given under sponsorship of the Speech Department. On March 28, 29, the Senior Class presented *Kind Lady* with considerable success and much public approval. The third full-length play, *Don't Take My Penny*, will be presented under sponsorship of the Junior Class. Thespians presented a contest of six one-act plays on February 14-15, consisting of *Goodnight Please*, *Patchwork Quilt*, *Black Harvest*, *Pink and Patches*, *Boy Comes Home*, and *Trifles*. First place honors were awarded to a performance of *Black Harvest*.—Fae Abbott, Secretary

### Nitro, West Va.

DRAMATICS activities are setting a new pace this season at the Nitro High School (Thespian Troupe 665), with Miss Sadie Marie Daher as director and Troupe sponsor. In January an assembly program consisting of choral readings and a skit was well received by students. Among the one-acts presented by the Masquers Club are *Thanks Awfully*, *The Invitation*, and *Christmas at Casey's*. The Masquers were also responsible for the production of a minstrel show on March 1. Several members also appeared in a radio program over Station WCHS. Club meetings are devoted to a study of make-up and choral readings. One of the major events of the season was the formal installation of Troupe 665 early in November, with sixteen students forming the charter roll.—Wanda McKee, Secretary.

### Minneapolis, Minn.

THE period play, *First Dance*, was given on February 10 at the Academy of the Holy Angels (Thespian Troupe 568) as the first ma-



Sene from *Papa Is All* at the Dearborn, Michigan, High School, with Jessie Church as director. (Thespian Troupe 586.)

jor dramatic production of the spring term. Some sixty students participated in a patriotic program presented on February 24, with the choric drama, *If He Could Speak*, as one of the principal events of the program. On March 3 members of the Sophomore Class appeared in a popular production of *Little Women*. Other dramatic events for this spring at the Academy include participation in the high school play festival at Lorcas College, Dubuque, Iowa. A number of dramatics students plan to attend this event, in addition to those who will appear in the play entry. Sister Charitas is director of dramatics and Troupe sponsor.

### St. Mary, Ohio

THE Junior Class production of *The Doctor Has a Daughter* on October 12 marked the opening of the present dramatic season at the Memorial High School (Thespian Troupe 629), with Miss Lillian Codington as director. Thespians followed with a production of *Where's Laurie?* on February 12. The third full-length play of the year will be presented by the Senior Class on April 26. A choice had not been made at the time of this writing. The operetta, *Jerry of Jericho Road*, was presented by a vocal chorus on March 15.—Mary Gerstner, Secretary.

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### Bay Village, Ohio

NEW interest in dramatics is being created this season at the Parkview High School (Thespian Troupe 494) under the leadership of Mrs. Molly W. Brush, Troupe sponsor. The first major production of the year, *A Little Honey*, was presented on December 1. Through participation in this play, as well as in other dramatic projects, a total of twenty-one new members were qualified and added to the Troupe late in February. Thespians are active in several dramatic projects which are underway for this spring. Mrs. Brush reports that students are highly interested in dramatic activities.

### Daytona Beach, Fla.

AN active and successful dramatics season is being enjoyed this year at the Mainland High School (Troupe 35) under the leadership of Mrs. Lee Rooney, Troupe sponsor. The Senior Class play, *The Night of January 16th*, was given with considerable success during the fall term. The Christmas play, *Why the Chimes Rang*, was also greeted with considerable approval. On March 7, Thespians presented their annual playbill of three one-acts, *Sham*, *Rehearsal*, and *The Neighbors*. This event is known as "Pepper Post Plays." Also in March, dramatics students participated in the drama festival held at Stetson University, Deland, Florida. The Junior Class play will be presented on May 17. Dramatics students have also attended performances of plays given at the Stetson Little Theatre. Nineteen students make up the membership of Troupe 35 at present.—*Betty Ray, Secretary*.

### Sarasota, Fla.

"WE are having an unusually good season in dramatics," writes Miss Etta Scarborough, dramatics director and Troupe sponsor at the Sarasota High School (Troupe 516). Almost 300 students are active in one capacity or another as members of the dramatics organizations of the school. Meetings are held monthly. Activities for the fall term came to a climax with the initiation of twenty-eight new Thespians on February 9. The ceremony was impressively performed before a large audience of students and parents.

### Greeley, Colo.

THESPIAN Troupe 657 was formally established at the Greeley High School late last semester under the direction of Mrs. Grace E. Dawson, with a group of seventeen students on the charter roll. The attractive installation service was followed by a reception for par-

ents, faculty members, and school patrons in general. Major dramatic production given so far this season include the first Thespian-sponsored play, *The Cradle Song*, *Why the Chimes Rang* (presented in observance of the Christmas Season), and the Senior Class play, *A Highland Fling*, given on March 7, 8. Attractive handbills are being prepared for the productions given this season. Mrs. Dawson reports that interest in dramatics is high and that a busy and successful program is being offered to both students and the public.

### Stambaugh, Mich.

CONSIDERABLE popular approval was given to a performance of the play, *Snafu*, at the Stambaugh High School (Troupe 215) late last semester. Students enjoyed working with the play, according to word received from Miss Helen Dunham, Troupe sponsor and director of dramatics. Thespians were active in several capacities with the production of the grade school cantata, *Hiawatha*, also presented during the fall term.

### East Liverpool, Ohio

A FORMAL candlelight initiation ceremony held in February at the East Liverpool High School (Troupe 319) was attended by members of Troupe 358 of the Salem, Ohio, High School, and Troupe 363 of the Wellsville, Ohio, High School. The impressive and dignified ceremony was under the direction of Miss Ruth Sloan, director of dramatics and Troupe sponsor at the East Liverpool school. During the school period which followed the ceremony, dramatic readings were given by Thespians Mary Mae Votaw and Esther Jean Mayhew, both from Salem, Ohio. A buffet luncheon was served later in the home economics room. Guests were Dr. W. G. Fordyce, superintendent of schools, Ralph W. Betts, principal of the East Liverpool High School, Mrs. Beryl Tarr, Troupe sponsor at the Salem High School, and Jack Yelland, sponsor of the Wellsville High School.—*Lorraine Desmaison, Secretary*.

### Ocala, Fla.

SPONSOR SAMUEL EFF has returned this season to his position as dramatics director at the Ocala High School (Thespian Troupe 182). Among major dramatics projects given so far this year are a radio dramatization of *The Christmas Carol* given over the local station, a modern version of *Macbeth* given for assembly, and an elaborate staging of *Little Women*, presented early in March. New interest in dramatics activities is being rapidly established under Mr. Eff's direction.



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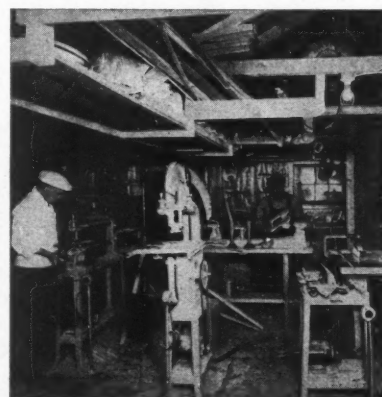
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## Robbinsdale, Minn.

**T**WENTY new members were added to Thespian Troupe 352 of the Robbinsdale High School at an impressive ceremony held during the activity period on December 12, with Sponsor Bess V. Sinnott in charge. Following the ceremony, which was the tenth of its kind for the school, the play, *Good King Wenceslaus*, was presented, with Jarold Jorgenson, Marian Velline, and Phyllis Murphey in the cast. The ceremony opened the day's celebration which included a banquet, an evening program, and a dance. Two members from Troupe 568 of the Academy of the Holy Angels and a representative from Troupe 596 of the Anoka High School were present.

## Mount St. Joseph, Ohio

**T**HESPIANS of Troupe 530 of the Mount St. Joseph Academy, with Sister Carita as sponsor, presented three dramatic productions during the fall term. The first of these, a one-act play entitled, *Shelved for the Summer*, was presented on November 9. The second play, a one-act play entitled *Boner's Schoolroom*, was given on November 30. The third production, a three-act play, *Young Mistress Bayley*, was staged on November 18. Club meetings were devoted to costume designing. Activities at present center on the production of the operetta, *Bits of Blarney*, scheduled for presentation on March 17, with the Boarders and Glee Club as sponsors.—Jennie Bolte, Secretary.

## Rockland, Me.

**T**HE three-act comedy, *Mollie O'Shaughnessey*, was enthusiastically received by large audiences on December 6, 7, at the Rockland High School (Thespian Troupe 431), with Thespian Regional Director Allston E. Smith directing. At the time of this writing plans were being made for the production of the Junior Class play in February. Tentative plans were also being made for the production of several one-act plays to be staged this spring by Thespians. The first Thespian initiation of the year was held on January 9 with twenty-five students accepting membership.—Lucille Mank, Secretary.

## Matewan, W. Va.

**A**N attractively designed handbill in keeping with the Christmas Season greeted those who attended the performance of three one-act plays on December 19 at the Magnolia High School (Thespian Troupe 189).

The playbill consisted of *Mrs. O'Malley's Christmas Eve*, *It's a Gift*, and *Pop Reads the Christmas Carol*. The program was a joint undertaking of the Glee Club and Dramatics Club, with Mrs. E. A. O'Brien and Mrs. J. F. Talbert directing.

## Rochester, Minn.

**T**he all-school play, *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, was given on November 8 at the Rochester Senior High School (Troupe 650) as the first major play of this season, with Mr. B. E. Moeller directing. The Drama Club presented two performances of *Children of the Inn* on December 21, in observance of the Christmas Season. Students of dramatics have also been active in presenting weekly programs over Station KROC. The latest project is the production of the operetta, *The Chocolate Soldier*, on February 27, with the Music and Dramatics Departments as joint sponsors.—Valeria Kennedy, Secretary.

## Davenport, Iowa

**O**N December 16, the Junior Cameo Players of the Immaculate Conception Academy (Troupe 654) presented their annual Christ-plays for the public, under the direction of Sister Mary Angelita, B. V. M. The playbill consisted of *Lesson in Charm*, *Sanctuary*, and *A Room for the Prince*. National Drama Week, February 3-9, was observed with the presentation of a second program of three one-act plays given by the Freshmen Cameo Players. The plays were *Lucky Penny*, *Buried Treasure*, and *Just for Justin*. Another major dramatic event of the winter season was the annual operetta presented on February 24, 25, by the combined glee clubs of the Immaculate Conception Academy and the St. Ambrose Academy. *The Mikado* will be offered this year, with speaking parts taken by several Cameo Players.—Pat Crowley, Secretary.

## Marked Tree, Ark.

**M**EMBERS of Troupe 301 of the Marked Tree High School predominated in the production of the Junior Class play presented in January. Thespians will also have leading roles in the Senior Class play scheduled for presentation in April. A local drama festival sponsored by Troupe members included the following entries: *Dark Wind*, *Women Who Wait*, *Sugar and Spice*, *Let's Make Up*, *When Shakespeare's Ladies Meet*, *When Shakespeare's Gentlemen Get Together*, and *The Kingdom of the Mind*. The outstanding plays will be

entered in the district festival this spring. The season so far has also included several special programs for children, choral readings, and the production of a number of playlets and skits. The dramatics program is under the general supervision of Mrs. Marie Thost Pierce.—Donna Swank, Secretary.

## Bloomington, Ind.

**M**EMBERS of the dramatic class of the University High School (Thespian Troupe 414), with Gayle C. Wilson as instructor, are presenting a series of four one-act plays for convocation purposes this year. The plays chosen are *The Opening of a Door*, *The Early Worm*, *Hanging Uncle Henry*, and *The White Phantom*. *The Early Worm* was given a second performance at the Bloomington High School (Troupe 142). Thespians contributed to other convocation programs during the fall term. The first major play of the year, *Best Foot Forward*, was given in December under Mr. Wilson's direction. The second full-length play of the year, *Nine Girls*, was given in February. Dramatics Club meetings are given to the study of pantomime.—Patricia Baker, Secretary.

## Filer, Idaho

**T**HREE major plays are included in the dramatics program for this season at the Filer High School (Thespian Troupe 444), with Mrs. Ethel S. Warberg directing. The first of these, *Brother Goose*, was given as a student body play on December 6. February saw the performance of the second student body play, *Our Town*. The third full-length play will be presented some time in April with the Senior Class as sponsors. The title of this play had not been chosen at the time of this writing. Members of the Speech Class have made their contribution to the dramatics program by presenting five performances of the one-act play, *Rich Man, Poor Man*, before various groups and organizations; two performances of *Alice Blue Gown*, and a performance of *Summons of Sarel and This Bull Ate Nutmeg*. Meetings of the dramatics groups are given to the study of voice, diction, characterization, and dramatic criticism. Plans will soon be made for entering the annual state-wide drama festival.

## Brownsville, Pa.

**M**EMBERS of Thespian Troupe 187 of the Brownsville High School will open the spring semester's play production program with the performance of *Come Rain or Shine* late in February. Recent one-acts given at this school have included *Lost Kiss*, *Trampled Garden*, *Antic Spring*, and *Once a Pupil*. The fall term saw the successful production of a Gay Nineties Revue (November 8), with Thespians as sponsors, and the Christmas pageant (December 1), a joint project of the School Band, chorus and Thespians. Dramatics students also gave their support to the local Alphecca Club in sponsoring a local appearance of the Pittsburgh Children's Theatre group. Miss Jean E. Donahey, recently elected Senior Council for The National Thespian Society, directs the dramatics program.—Eleanor Dubois, Secretary.

## Sunnyside, Wash.

**T**HE fall semester in dramatics at the Sunnyside High School (Troupe 492) included the production of the three-act comedy, *Professor How Could You*, given by the Senior Class on November 16, with Winifred Kildow directing, and a one-act play, *Wanted A Turkey*, presented by the Freshman Class. Make-up for the stage, and radio acting, were among the subjects considered at the dramatics club meetings.—Margaret Benedetti, Secretary.



*Seven Keys to Baldpate* as given by Troupe 650 at the Rochester, Minn., High School, with Mr. B. E. Moeller directing.



# What's New among Books and Plays

Review Staff:

Mary Ella Bovee, Blanford Jennings, Marion Stuart, Marion V. Brown, Elmer S. Crowley, Robert Ensley, Helen Movius, Roberta D. Sheets.

Reviews appearing in this department aim to help our readers keep up with recent books and plays. Opinions expressed are those of the reviewer only. Mention of a book or play in this department does not constitute an endorsement by DRAMATICS MAGAZINE.

Walter H. Baker Company, 178 Tremont St., Boston 11, Mass.

*The Maid of Brazzaville*, a play in one act, by Agnes Kendrick Gray. 2 m., 2 w., 1 small boy. Royalty, \$10. This play is definitely modern in tone, dealing, as it does, with the Free French movement. Jeanne d'Arc appears before a young French patriot in French Equatorial Africa and shows him that New France must be built upon the sufferings of her people, even as the France of old was. Part of the play is poetry, and this adds an unusual touch to an already strong and meaningful work. The play has excellent contest possibilities.—*Mary Ella Bovee*.

*Ladies in Danger*, a mystery comedy-drama in three acts, by Joseph Carlton. 11 w. Purchase of 10 copies gives the right to one amateur performance; \$2.50 for each subsequent performance. The action may take place as effectively against curtains as against a set painted to represent the attic of an old abandoned house. Rain effect is important to the success of the play, and the sound of oars in water requires skillful handling. The characters are varied and well-drawn, and the dialogue, in general, is well written, with a ring of truth to it. The situation is a popular one, though inclined to be overdone—that of strangely assorted groups of persons brought together in an emergency or disaster. In this case, it is a flood on the lower Mississippi. Of course, it is inevitable that the lives of certain of these characters have crossed before this event. Melodrama is present to a large degree, even to the idea of buried treasure in the old house. The play, however, does provide a good opportunity for characterization.—*Mary Ella Bovee*.

*Mrs. Plaster of Paris*, a comedy-drama in three acts, by Charles George. 3 m., 9 w. Royalty, purchase of ten copies for the first performance; \$2.50 repeat performances. After the murder of her husband, William Clifford, near Paris, Texas, Pauline Clifford changes her name to Mrs. Pauline Plaster and sets out on the seemingly impossible task of finding her husband's murderer. Chance leads her to the town of Horton, and the usual suspicions of the town gossips are aroused concerning this new widow in their midst. Mrs. Plaster not only triumphs over the gossips but also finds her husband's murderer as well. The play has one easy setting, action, and suspense. All but three of the characters are middle aged or older.—*Jean E. Donahy*.

The Heuer Publishing Co., Cedar Rapids, Ia.

*Strictly Confidential*, a farce in three acts, by J. Vincent Barrett. 4 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$10. Bill Rowland's business plans become involved in a mixup because Janie, his wife's inquisitive young sister, opens his mail and listens to his telephone conversations. Thus his wife learns that his "strictly confidential" business is with a former sweetheart. A domineering cook adds further to his difficulties which continue to pile up to the climax. Here he is sure that all is lost for the wealthy aunt who will, he hopes, help him out financially is mistaken for a man masquerading as a woman and treated roughly by Bill's partner. Naturally, the whole situation is explained in the last scene and the play ends with everyone happy. This farce is suitable for schools wish-

ing a light plot, humorous situations and fast-moving action.—*Helen Movius*.

*Peggy Was Great*, a comedy in 3 acts, by B. E. Mitchell. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$10. Peggy Gordon, at the age of 3, becomes lost when traveling with her parents. The Lindsays, of the Ozark mountains, find her and rear her, believing she is an orphan. Several years later a man and his wife have a car break down near the farm. During this forced stay the couple become interested in Peggy to the extent of persuading the Lindsays to allow them to take Peggy home with them to be educated. A heavy mixture of sentiment and farce. Several interesting hill-billy types provide the humor. Obvious, easy, frequently talkative. Suitable for high schools.—*Robert W. Ensley*.

The Dramatic Publishing Co., 59 East Van Buren St., Chicago, Ill.

*The Little Minister*, a play in three acts, dramatized from James M. Barrie's story, by Roland Fernand. 5 m., 6 w., and extras. Maximum royalty, \$25; minimum fee, \$10. In this dramatization, the emphasis is on the story values, and no attempt is made to make this a dialect play. The setting is simple, and the Scotch costumes of 1860 offer no serious problem. *The Little Minister* is one of the best known and best loved of Barrie's writings, and this dramatization retains the same color and flavor as the original. The dialogue is natural, and the characters "flesh and blood" persons. For those directors who want to turn from the beaten path of modern high school drama, this play makes an excellent choice. Students are usually acquainted beforehand with the characters of this story, and their interpretations are, therefore, more interesting to work on and easier to achieve.—*Mary Ella Bovee*.

*Sing for Your Supper*, a comedy in three acts, by Anne Coulter Martens. 5 m., 8 w., and extra girls. Royalty, \$10. This play is built on the old theme, mistaken identity; and confusion arises when a young man, wishing to hide his true identity as the "Mystery Crooner," applies for a position as high school music teacher. The characters are entirely "type"; and even the "bobby-soxers" are a trifle overdrawn and not quite believable to anyone acquainted with this adolescent stage. *Sing for Your Supper* is a play of average opportunity in direction, staging, or acting.—*Mary Ella Bovee*.

*The Gals Take Over*, a short entertainment, by Arthur Le Roy Kaser. 11 w. Royalty free with the purchase of eight copies. The lady mayor and a feminine council take over the city government. The first council meeting is a riot. All the characters are adults. Appeal for high schools is limited.—*Roberta D. Sheets*.

Eldridge Entertainment House, Inc., Franklin, Ohio.

*How Could You, Mom?* A comedy in three acts, by James F. Stone. 6 m., 6 w. No royalty but 12 copies must be purchased. Here is a domestic comedy in which the level-headed daughter suffers from too much maternal assistance in acquiring a husband. The father of the family is mainly interested in attending fires and in the milder diversion of radio and magazine contests. Much of the action centers around the attraction of the Sweepstakes ticket which

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The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N. C.

*Pioneering A People's Theatre*, edited by Archibald Henderson. 104 pages. 1946. Price, \$2.00. This attractive volume is the story of the late Professor Frederick H. Koch and his work with the Carolina Playmakers during the years 1919 through 1945. Among the contributors are Samuel Selden, Archibald Henderson, Paul Green, Kai Heiberg-Jurgensen, George R. Coffman, and Marion Fitz-Simons, all of whom were closely associated with Koch and who, since his death, have taken over the work of the Carolina Playmakers. Besides the fact that this collection of theatre papers makes extremely interesting reading, the book contains much that should serve to stir others to greater and better work in behalf of the American theatre. Mr. Henderson's promises (*Scholium Scribendi*) of an expanding program for the Playmakers is welcomed news. Entirely too few are the schools and groups that are, in the truest sense, pioneering in the building of a national theatre. The work of Professor Koch must be continued with increasing tempo. *Pioneering A People's Theatre* merits carefully study on the part of all theatre workers, for in its pages is the formula for the making, someday, of a truly great American theatre.—Ernest Bavely.

Samuel French, 25 West 45th St., New York, N. Y.

*Life of the Party*, a family comedy in three acts, by Marjane and Joseph Hayes. 7 m., 10 w., extras if desired. Royalty, \$25. This play concerns a family which moves into a new neighborhood and begins to make friends. The quiet daughter throws off her reticent attitudes and suddenly becomes the life of the party, and what a party, involving the whole family. There is good comedy, needs a relatively fast tempo and is fast moving. This play can be staged easily by most high schools and should provide a bright evening of entertainment. Same scene is used for all three acts.—A. E. Bilger.

*Soap Opera*, a farce in one act, by John Kirkpatrick. 2 m., 6 f. Royalty, \$5. As the name implies, the play deals with this type of radio drama. Ed Reeves has no use for such nonsense and is angered when he receives no sympathy for his sprained ankle, because his wife and her friends must follow "Vera's Vicissitudes." After a quarrel, he is left alone and the radio serial comes to life before his very eyes. He is surprised to learn that he, too, is interested in "Vera." Since "anything goes" in a farce, this will probably "go," too.—Mary Ella Boveé.

*Youth and Consequence*, a comedy in 2 acts, by Peggy London. 1 m., 7 f. Royalty, \$5.00. The plot is rather shop-worn, but its treatment is fresh and pleasant, because the characters and lines have a genuine quality that is seldom found in plays of recent seasons. A widower plans to remarry, but his children do not approve of his choice, believing that their governess would make a far better step-mother. Since "love is blind," the children, with the assistance of some friends, prove to their father the wisdom of their judgment. It is a happy little play and definitely worth a trial in any program of one acts.—Mary Ella Boveé.

*Miss Posey from Poseyville*, a comedy in 3 acts, by Charles George. 3 m., 9 w. Royalty, \$10. Mrs. Dean runs a boarding house in New York which caters to theatrically and artistically inspired youngsters. Clark Kendall, a struggling musician, is one of the roomers, who is

in the process of readying a musical. Presently there arrives Ann Posey, an inspired and talented young singer, who had met Clark on Cape Cod the summer the musical was written and has arrived on the strength of an unguarded statement of Clark's that he would be glad to help her along some time. Close on Ann's arrival is a detective sent by her aunts who have accused Clark of encouraging the girl to run away from their care. As though this weren't enough to cause a big enough headache for Clark, the leading lady becomes jealous of Ann and quits the show with the proverbial 48 hours to go. Ann makes the grade with the musical and Clark. Easy, obvious, too talkative, and often tries to force a moral.—Robert W. Ensley.

*The Laff Revue*, a vaudeville show consisting of skits, stunts, and specialties. Royalty, purchase of five copies. Throw together a master of ceremonies, a comedian, and a girl and you have the basis for this revue. Like most revues the M.C. is only for the purpose of talking so scene changes can be made and to entertain the while. One of the difficulties with this revue is that it is too topical for present performances. For those who would like a skeleton upon which to build a show with up-to-date jokes it would be helpful.—Robert W. Ensley.

F. S. Crofts & Co., 101 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

*Modern Theatre Practice*, by Hubert C. Heffner Samuel Selden and Hunton D. Sellman, with an Appendix on Costume and Make-up, by Fairfax P. Walkup, in its third edition offers a comprehensive discussion of the art of staging a play. This book in its earlier editions took its place as a standard guide for drama directors in the school and community theatre. The book has profited by the additions of the two new chapters, on the structure of drama and on sound effects. The reviewer is glad to see the retention of Fairfax Walkup's contribution on costuming and make-up. However, he has wondered why the authors feel that costuming and make-up belong in the appendix of a book on staging plays. He feels the book would be improved if these two essentials were admitted to the body of the book. *Modern Theatre Practice* deserves high praise for its readability, its clear cut illustrations and practical advice, its hints on how to plan a rehearsal schedule and how to work out sensible costume and make-up work plots.—Earl W. Blank.

Row, Peterson & Company, Evanston, Illinois.

*Three Dying Swans*, a one-act comedy, by Mary Thurman Pyle. 6 women, 3 men. No royalty, purchasing of eight books required. Betty and Martha Green are studying ballet and do their practicing at home. The Conovers living in the apartment below protest. Mr. Green doesn't appreciate the budding Pavlovas either, but Mrs. Green manages a compromise. To girls who have studied dancing, the play will seem funny. Not difficult to produce.

*Dame Margery Sees Too Much*, a charming short play for children, by Mary Thurman Pyle. 8 boys, 12 girls and extras. May be performed royalty free if ten copies are purchased. The play is a dramatization of Howard Pyle's famous story and retains all the charm and quaintness of that tale. Dame Margery has been called to fairy land to treat the fairy princess and when she returns, salve is applied to her eyes. But the Dame closes one eye and so retains both mortal and fairy vision. The results are most engaging. Children will have great fun either acting or seeing this play.—Roberta Dinwiddie Sheets.

*Broken Rehearsal*, a one-act play for ten girls, by Nellie McCaslin. Purchase of ten copies required. High school girls are carrying on the rehearsal of a play. The director is not present, so they talk more than they rehearse. Naturally, they discuss the cast, a party, and the fact that Janie comes from across the tracks. Janie overhears. A lesson in democracy is the obvious conclusion.—Roberta Dinwiddie Sheets.



# Plays for Spring Production

## BLITHE SPIRIT

By Noel Coward

From a very novel situation Noel Coward has fashioned a play which is hilarious as only a Coward farce can be. The *New York Sun* stated: "Mr. Coward has never, I think, been happier in his inventions or more adept." 2 m., 5 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$50.00.)

## THE DEEP MRS. SYKES

By George Kelly

The author of *Torchbearers*, *The Show-Off* and *Craig's Wife* has accomplished another distinguished and brilliant piece of writing. 6 m., 8 f. \$2.00. (Production restricted. Royalty on application.)

## THIS BEING YOUNG

By Richard Young

The saga of Pam Powers, a fourteen-year-old, up-to-the-minute young lady who is burdened with all the troubles of the world, is bringing up her parents. 5 m., 7 f. 60c. (Royalty, \$10.00.)

## COME RAIN OR SHINE

By Marjiane and Joseph Hayes

A gay new comedy by the authors of the extremely popular *And Came the Spring*. The play tells in amusing fashion of the incidents which lead a college-age young lady into a young womanhood which retains the light-hearted charm of youth. Ideal for high schools and colleges. 5 m., 10 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## BUT NOT GOODBYE

By George Seaton

Amiable fantasy about a ghost who saves his family from bankruptcy in a highly amusing manner. A John Golden production on Broadway. 8 m., 7 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## THIN ICE

By Betty Ann and Ray H. Mattingley

The amusing story of how the Edwards family gets its ego and several family vertebrae back into place during one eventful Christmas vacation. 6 m., 9 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## YOUNG MAN OF TODAY

By Aurania Rouverol

The popular author of *Skidding* and *Growing Pains* has given us a timely and worthwhile play in this dramatically revealing history of the Jason family—and young America—in the past three years. 10 m., 6 f. 75c. (Restricted in a few territories. Royalty on application where available.)

## SOLDIER'S WIFE

By Rose Franken

This Martha Scott vehicle is concerned with young Mrs. Rogers, who finds herself the author of a best-seller—and with many problems. 2 m., 3 f. \$2.00. (Royalty, where available, quoted on application.)

## CLAUDIA

By Rose Franken

Popular comedy success. Child-wife Claudia meets three crises which lead her into womanhood. Tenderly, humorously told, the story has universal appeal—a big hit! 3 m., 5 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$50.00.)

## THE FIGHTING LITTLES

By Caroline Francke

Booth Tarkington's recent novel makes an amiable and delightful family comedy. Through three acts the quick-tempered Littles squabble their way through differences in viewpoint and ridiculous situations without even knowing how funny they are. 5 m., 10 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## THE DOCTOR HAS A DAUGHTER

By George Batson

The author of the popular *Every Family Has One* relates the comic adventures and misadventures of a small town junior miss whose over-active imagination gets everyone into hot water but finally emerges triumphant. 5 m., 7 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## SPRING GREEN

By Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements

Most often produced by Thespian-Affiliated Schools during the 1944-45 season. Another funny play by the authors of the outstanding *Ever Since Eve* and *June Mad*; about a boy whose father doesn't understand him and a girl whose mother understands her only too well. 8 m., 7 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## EVERY FAMILY HAS ONE

By George Batson

The eccentric Reardons, overimpressed with their ancestry, are brought sharply to their senses when cantankerous Grandma and a pretty visiting cousin drag skeletons from the closets, causing comic havoc. 5 m., 7 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## AND CAME THE SPRING

By Marjiane and Joseph Hayes

New, worthwhile comedy of youth about a charming hoyden who, under the influence of Spring and first love, disrupts a pleasant, typical American home in a brightly humorous manner. Touched with sentiment. Designed to entertain. 9 m., 8 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## HARRIET

By Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements

An outstanding Broadway hit with Helen Hayes. It is based on the life of one of the greatest American women of the nineteenth century, Harriet Beecher Stowe. 7 m., 10 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$50.00.)

## MURDER AT RANDOM

By Robert Finch

Humor and surprise are the keynotes of this unusual mystery-comedy which has to do with the adventures of a young man forced to spend a night in an old farmhouse. 7 m., 6 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

## JANIE

By Josephine Benthall and Herschel Williams

The hilarious Broadway hit which tells what happens when a cavalcade of exuberant fellows in uniform meet a bevy of high school young ladies and they decide to throw a party. 13 m., 8 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$50.00.)

## WHEN GINNY COMES MARCHING HOME

By Wilbur Braun

This new comedy, by the author of *Aunt Tillie Goes to Town*, is concerned with the absurdly comic experiences that befall Ginny upon her return from the WACS. 5 m., 7 f. 60c. (Budget Play.)

## MAMA HAD A HUNCH

By Nan Fleming

Mama Kincaid is given to acting on hunches which have a way of backfiring with disastrous results. General chaos reigns in the charming Kincaid household. 5 m., 6 f. 60c. (Royalty, \$10.00.)

## LIFE AT AUNT MINNIE'S

By Peggy Fernway

Peggy Fernway, author of *The Girls Take Over*, gives us a brand new concoction with hilarity as the main ingredient. 5 m., 7 f. 60c. (Budget Play.)

## THE GHOST TRAIN

By Arnold Ridley

Suspense predominates in this fascinating mystery-thriller which tells how daring rum-runners take advantage of a New England legend concerning a phantom train. 7 m., 4 f. 75c. (Royalty, \$25.00.)

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